

WALSALL CHRONICLE

Thursday, March 6, 2014

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See Page 2



Family pride

Brave smile recalled by Ben's loved ones

See Page 5



Saddlers' woe

Red card adds insult to injury for Walsall

See Page 44



3,500 in bus lane fines over 6 months

ALMOST 3,500 motorists have been fined for using bus lanes illegally in less than six months, new figures have revealed.

Walsall Council has launched a crackdown on problem drivers which has seen a car equipped with a mobile camera take to the streets, aiming to catch drivers across the borough who use lanes to queue and jump.

The fines have been dished out between last September and January of this year. Drivers are asked to pay £60, although it is reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days.

Figures also reveal that a total of 220 motorists have appeared against their fines.

They were all issued between last September and January of this year. Council chiefs vowed to take action after receiving requests from bus operators.

Regeneration and transport chief councillor Adrian Andrew said: "During September 2013 to January 2014, we issued 3,439 penalty charge notices for bus lane contraventions and received 225 appeals.

Injuries led to death of girl

A MOTHER whose daughter was killed in a crash on the way to school is still unconscious, an inquest heard.

The hearing was opened following the death of Natasha Whale, who was in a car being driven by her mother Shelley which crashed with an Adams Tours coach, on Monday, February 24.

Opening the inquest at Walsall Coroner's Court on Friday, Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said the 13-year-old, of St Paul's Crescent, Pelsall, had died of multiple injuries.

● Balloons - See Page 2

FURY AS YOBS ATTACK TREES

KEY figures in a Walsall area have attacked mindless yobs who have snapped trees within days of them being planted.

The trees were introduced as part of a £1,500 project to brighten up the area. Half of the 20 rowan trees, which are up to 10ft tall, have been damaged at The Lea fields in Goscoe.

They were only planted last Thursday and have been damaged over the last few days, to the anger of residents.

An avenue of trees had been created near the new path, but eight of the 10 have been snapped. Two more put in the nature area have also been attacked.

Money to plant the new trees had been secured through the community development fund following an application to Walsall Housing Group. The Friends Around The Lea group has been helping to lead improvements in the area after fighting off plans to build homes on the land. Benches have already been installed.

Community

Secretary of the group Ken Wall condemned those responsible: "It is mindless. I don't know how to describe them. I am very angry and very frustrated. These trees are something to brighten the place up. We are doing this for everyone's benefit, this is being done for future generations.

"The majority of the community round here are decent hard working people. We have fought to save The Lea being built on. The council have really come on board and brought this piece of land back to how it used to be." It is not clear how yobs have managed to damage the trees. The first are

Report by Craig Hughes

believed to have snapped in the first 24 hours after they were planted and then more were damaged over the weekend.

It comes after a swan was found dead at the side of a canal in Walsall, amid fears it may have been attacked by a dog earlier this year.

There have also been previous issues with lurcher dogs set loose to bait animals and to intimidate walkers on the land, while arsonists last year sparked a series of fires and motorbikes have been using the fields to race along. Land at The Lea had been earmarked for redevelopment as part of moves to build hundreds of new homes in Goscoe.

More than 800 objections were lodged against the loss of green belt land and the scheme was dropped by Walsall Housing Group and Walsall Council.

Blakenall ward councillor Pete Smith called on residents to report any suspicious behaviour. He said: "We fought hard to save The Lea from the developers and set up a friends group. It's a big expanse of land with a canal running through it and they have really worked hard to try to address some of the issues but there are still problems with anti-social behaviour."

Budding floral artists shed their past



Twins Victoria, left and Jessica Richards, who have set up their own florist business after using their gran's shed

FOR the past two years they have been producing spectacular floral arrangements from their grandmother's shed, but these award-winning identical twins are set to open up a new store in the Black Country.

Jessica and Victoria Richards will set up shop at Richards Floral Design in the shadow of Bantock House on Broad Lane in Bradmore, Wolverhampton, on Saturday.

The duo, who boast three Chelsea Flower Show gold medals between them, have built up a reputation for excellence when it comes to providing fantastic fauna for weddings, funerals and personalised gifts.

The 25-year-old sisters from Willenhall both worked at Lavender Florist in Penkridge, while simultaneously operating their own business from a custom-built studio in their grandmother's back yard.

The pair's floral fascination started when they were teenagers and since studying floristry at South Staffordshire's Rodbaston College they have gone on to create displays in the last two editions of the Chelsea Flower Show. Jessica, said owning their own shop was something the pair had always wanted to do.

"The shed has definitely served its purpose but we have outgrown it," she

said. "It has always been a dream of ours to have our own shop." Despite the move, Jessica said her grandmother wouldn't be getting her garden space back just yet. We use a lot of materials when producing displays so I think the old shed will still come in handy for storage," she added.

Jessica said her sister is now recognised as one of the top flower arrangers in the country, having come fifth in last year's UK Skills Competition. Richards Floral Design will open for trade on Saturday March 8 at 8.30am. For further information, plus details on how to enter a special competition, e-mail info@richardsfloraldesign.com

£170,000 more for hospital staff bill

AN EXTRA £170,000 a month was spent on temporary workers at Walsall Hospital in January as it continues to deal with high levels of admissions. The bill for agency, bank and locum workers at Walsall Manor hit £1.7m in the first month of this year, an increase on previous months.

It comes after health chiefs with the Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group appealed for patients to only use the A&E department if their condition is serious or life-threatening due to pressure on the hospital.

Bosses at the hospital have been trying to tackle the costs of temporary workers since the bill hit a record of £2.06m last September. A recruitment drive for up to 130 new staff was launched last year.

The majority of the increase at the start of this year relates to agency costs increasing to £781,000 from £604,000 the month before. Locum expenditure increased by just £1,000 to £368,000 while bank costs reduced from £558,000 to £552,000.

A further recruitment of up to 40 nurses is being planned by the hospital as part of £1.3m proposals. More registered nurses are being earmarked for the hospital to provide additional cover.

● Decision - See Page 2

Dog fouling action plea

A CRACKDOWN on dog fouling is being sought amid complaints over mess.

Concerns have been raised about pooches pooping in the Ashmore Lake area of Willenhall. Irresponsible owners have not been cleaning up mess while others have flung plastic bags into long grass behind homes in Milford Avenue.

Councillor Doreen Shires said: "We are asking Walsall Council to target this area to get all dog owners to act responsibly. If caught in the act there is a £1,000 fine."

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War heroes' paving stones move

PAVING stones will be laid to honour two men who received the country's highest award for gallantry as part of the commemorations of the centenary of the First World War.

John Henry Carless and Charles George Bonner, both from Walsall, were awarded the Victoria Cross in recognition of their bravery. A paving stone for Carless will be laid in November 2017 and one for Bonner will be laid in May 2018.

The locations for the stones have not yet been confirmed. It comes as Walsall Council has launched a new website commemorating the First World War centenary.

Carless was 21-years-old and an Ordinary Seaman in the Royal Navy during the First World War.

On November 17, 1917, at the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight, off the German coast, Carless was serving on HMS Caledon.

The citation issued when he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross read: "For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. Although mortally wounded in the abdomen, he still went on serving the gun."

"He collapsed once, but got up, tried again, and cheered on the new gun's crew. He then fell and died." Bonner was born in 1884 and as a lieutenant in the Royal Naval

Reserve was serving in the Bay of Biscay during the night of August 8, 1917 on board HMS Dunraven. His citation said: "Awarded in recognition of his conspicuous gallantry and consummate coolness and skill, in action with an enemy submarine."

The website, www.firstworldwar-walsall.co.uk, also contains information about the commemorative paving stones project.

Decision by Hunt is backed by chiefs

HEALTH bosses in Walsall have welcomed a decision by health secretary Jeremy Hunt to dissolve Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust – as resources become more stretched.

Up to £14million could be ploughed into Walsall Manor to help it cope with an influx of patients from Staffordshire. It comes as Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group urges patients to only use A&E if their condition is serious or life threatening.

Chief executive Richard Kirby backed the decision which will see some services sent from Stafford to other hospitals and said: "The Trust Special Administrator has recognised that we will need capital investment in order to continue to do this. The potential £14m investment, which is what we estimate we will need, will see improvements in maternity, additional ward space and we will be looking to enhance our A&E and critical care facilities."

Health campaigner, Blakenall councillor Pete Smith, said: "As a result of what has been announced we need to invest more in the Manor."

Pensioner had Parkinson's

A RETIRED mechanic died of natural causes a coroner has ruled.

Ivor Bowler has been suffering with Parkinson's disease and was a resident at Richmond Hall care home in Aldridge for just eight days when he died in September 2012.

Smethwick Coroners Court heard last week the 84-year-old had pressure sores which had begun to worsen. He was admitted to Walsall Manor Hospital but died on September 25.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain concluded Mr Bowler died of natural causes.

Cable sparks fire

AN electrical fault sparked a blaze in the back bedroom of a house. On Sunday morning, neighbours alerted the fire service after seeing smoke coming from the detached property in Ganton Road, Bloxwich. An extension cable is believed to have overheated.

Construction chief in £250m turnover hope

THE new boss of a construction company bucking the economic trend by landing multi-million pound housing deals – says he hopes to see its turnover rise to £250 million.

Walsall-based Bullock, led by new chief executive Ian Burnett, was last year awarded a massive £94m deal with social housing landlord Wolverhampton Homes to revamp properties within its jurisdiction.

Care home gets huge thumbs-up

A CARE home has been rated 931 out of a possible 1,000 for the quality of life it offers.

Pelsall Hall Care Home also achieved a rating of 930 out of 1,000 for its home comforts after residents completed a survey.

The Paradise Lane home received an overall performance rating of 949.

More than 20,000 people who are residents at 1,055 care homes across the UK took part in the nationwide Your Care Rating survey.

The study was designed to give residents a voice and has been a vital tool for families and loved ones when they are choosing a care home for someone close.

Ratings are based on staff and care, home comforts, choice and quality of life.

Manager Steve Brookes said: "We're delighted with our results from the survey as it demonstrates how fulfilled our residents are."

"All of our scores across the four main themes are high and it just goes to show that the reality of day-to-day life in a care home such as ours is very good, something which is often at odds with the public's perception."

Mr Burnett said that among his aims for the national company was to see turnover which shrunk from £180m to £120m as a result of the credit crunch, rise to £250m within the next four years.

The firm has a number of projects which are under way in the West Midlands including a £4m development for 38 new homes, in Beaconsfield Road, West Bromwich, to replace a demolished block of Sandwell Council-owned maisonettes.

Mr Burnett, who previously spent 18 years at building contractor Wates and before that 14 years at Interserve, had spent six months as an independent consultant to the board before being appointed as chief executive.

He said in addition to seeing turnover increase at Bullock which has its headquarters, in Northgate, Aldridge, he also plans to move it into the care home development market.

"My vision for the future is to see the business achieve £250m in turnover by two to four years time. We are working across the Midlands, Yorkshire, Lancashire and south Wales and would also like to spread our wings into London. Bullock lives and breathes from Aldridge where its heart is."

"It started life here as a family business and has grown. But I would also like to see it bring back that family rooting it had in its early days."

Balloons for tragic Natasha



Balloons being released at the end of a football match in memory of Natasha Whale

HUNDREDS of footballers held a minute's silence and released balloons in memory of a teenager who tragically died in a car crash on her way to school. Thirteen-year-old Natasha Whale, from Walsall, was killed last Monday after the car in which she was a back-seat passenger collided with a coach.

Keen footballer Natasha had played for Wyrley Pumas, the female section of Wyrley Juniors FC, and was a member of the Burntwood Phoenix under 14s team.

On Saturday the Staffordshire County Girls Football League held a minute's silence across games involving more than 30 teams to commemorate the life of the former Walsall Academy schoolgirl.

Several red and black balloons were released into the sky after her former team Burntwood Phoenix's game at the Burntwood Leisure Centre in Chasetown. Team co-ordinator Wendy Bryant said: "She will be dearly missed by all that knew her."

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NEWS

NEWS
in briefEntertainment
to help heroes

A DAY of entertainment with music and comedy will raise money for Help for Heroes.

It is taking place at The Crown pub, Cheapside, Willenhall, on April 21 from 2pm onwards.

Members of the Armed Forces have been invited and are due to attend the Bank Holiday event.

There will be raffles and a percentage of takings from the fundraiser will go towards the charity.

Tickets are £2 and available from the pub or by calling 01902 602372.

Watchdog wants
views of patients

A HEALTH watchdog has launched a new website for patients to air their views on care they receive.

Healthwatch Walsall's site will have a feedback facility called 'Service Watch' for people to give feedback through a few short questions.

The new website also provides information about Healthwatch's role as the public champion for health and social care and links to other information.

The website can be viewed at www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

Egging on for
society's raffle

RAFFLE tickets for a giant Easter egg are available to raise money for charity.

The 16.5lb egg decorated with daisies in icing is being raffled off to raise money for the Walsall Society for the Blind.

Bescot Market stall owner Ken Bedford is raffling the item to collect cash for the worthy causes. Raffle tickets are £1 a go, available until April 13.

Coroner looking
to trace relatives

A CORONER's office is trying to trace the family of a man who died in Walsall.

Graham Gordon, aged 61, died on February 17 at an address in Hanover Court, Bentley Road North, Bentley.

Call coroner's officer Elaine Hucklefield at Smethwick Council House on 0845 352 7490.

Houses scheme

PLANS to build two new homes have been lodged. The semi detached properties would be built on land adjacent to Rosewood Gardens in Essington, if given the go ahead by the district council.

Influx of
migrants
top issue
in survey

IMMIGRATION is the main concern for people in part of the Black Country, a survey has found.

Douglas Hansen-Luke, who is the Conservative candidate in Walsall North for next year's General Election, asked 6,542 people for the biggest issues that mattered to them and their families.

The survey was carried out in Bloxwich, Willenhall, Short Heath, Blakenhall and Birchills-Leamore.

It found 57 per cent of people raised immigration as one of the three issues that mattered to them while 66 per cent said it was one of the issues that mattered to the country as a whole.

Mr Hansen-Luke said: "We've found that immigration is an issue to around two-thirds of locals.

"It's important that we as politicians and activists reflect what people care about. We need an open and honest debate about immigration and what we as a country should be doing.

"I believe we need to be tougher on immigration.

"We should welcome the brightest and the best, ensuring people come to the UK for the right reasons - not to take advantage of our public services."

Housing in
awards hope

A TOWN's first low carbon timber housing development is in the running for a national award.

Pattern Gardens in Darlaston which consists of 106 homes is competing for the development of the year title at the UK Housing Awards.

The £10 million scheme was developed by the Accord Group and built by Mar City Developments on a former industrial site. It features apartments and two, three and four-bedroom homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and sale.

The winner will be announced at a ceremony in London in April.

Spring market

PREPARATIONS are being made for a spring market at a church in Walsall.

The event is taking place at Rushall Parish Church, in Leigh Road, on March 15 from 11am.

Bric-a-brac, books, clothes, cakes and plants will be sold on stalls.

Flagging up support for identity of town



Members of the Willenhallaywe group

A COMMUNITY is being urged to help design a flag and celebrate a Black Country town.

The design for Willenhall will be officially registered with the Flag Institute and the chosen image will be selected by the public.

The idea has come from the community website willenhallaywe.co.uk and shopping giant Poundland has teamed up to launch the competition.

It is hoped a town flag will serve as a symbol for the community and raise the profile of the area. It comes as a Black Country Day is being planned this summer.

Schools, individuals and other groups

have until March 21 to enter. Following this judges will convene to select finalists that will be go to a public vote between April 7 and 26.

The winner will then be registered as the town's flag and will be unveiled at the Willenhall Carnival on June 14.

Councillors

Entry forms can be found at the willenhallaywe.co.uk/flying-the-flag-for-willenhall website.

The judging panel will comprise Poundland, Willenhall History Society, Walsall Local History Centre, WH Tildesley, Wil-

lenhall Town FC and councillors. Kalie Plant, from willenhallaywe.co.uk said "A Willenhall flag will be a great opportunity to give our proud corner of the Black Country something to rally around.

"We are looking forward to Willenhall folk working together, to literally fly the flag for our hometown."

Philip Tibbetts, communities cexilologist for the Flag Institute, said: "As a local Black Country man myself it is fantastic to see and support the enthusiastic adoption of flags to promote local identity. I look forward to seeing the Willenhall and Black Country flags flying proudly side-by-side."

More radiologists taken
on to cope with demand

WALSALL Manor Hospital has taken on more radiologists to cope with a rise in demand for the service that would have resulted in a two-week wait for outpatients, it has emerged.

A meeting of healthcare chiefs was told that the trust's performance and monitoring system had flagged up problems regarding requests for non-emergency scans, including GP referrals.

Since the start of this year the radiology department has employed two extra staff to help reduce the waiting times for the images to be done and the results reported back to doctors.

Walsall Healthcare Trust Mr Amir Khan said: "It's very important to stress that this situation is not affecting emergency cases or patients admitted to the hospital. Scans for those patients are done there and then.

"We have now made an investment in radiology because the demand has increased around staffing. We have had two new people this year and there are plans to take on an additional one per year over the next two years."

He added that there was a national shortage of hospital radiographers and the situation was not unique to the Manor.

Also at the trust board meeting chief executive Richard Kirby said he did not know when the hospital would receive extra cash to help cope with an influx of patients from Staffordshire.

After the announcement by Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt that Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust would be scrapped around £14 million is to be ploughed into Manor Hospital to cope with the influx of patients from the neighbouring county under re-organisation of key services.

The cottage is single storey and has recently been refurbished but the museum building is in need of 'repair and improvement.'

The description of the building states there are plans to redevelop the ex-museum into a residential development comprising two separate units.

African mission to help orphans



Passport at the ready and a bag full of sweets, Surinderjit Kular is off to Ghana to do voluntary work

A KITCHEN and bathroom fitter from the Black Country has left his steady job behind to help teach poverty-stricken children in Africa for eight weeks.

Surinderjit Kular has already raised £15,000 in donations for the orphanage in Ghana by pounding the streets of Walsall. And he has since headed off to Awutu Bawjase to spend two months at the United Heart Children's Centre. He is working as a mentor and tutor on a scheme run by the Global Voluntary Network. Mr

Kular, who has three daughters aged 21, 18 and 15, said he was inspired after seeing footage of families struggling to survive.

Volunteers usually embark on a two-week trip but Mr Kular said he wanted to spend the maximum time possible there. The 47-year-old, of Pleck, who is self-employed, said: "I will be living with no running water in a basic bed with mosquito nets and I will be the only volunteer from England. I thought I should take the chance and do it while I can. Why

postpone until tomorrow what you can do today? It's an important cause and I want to do what I can.

"The organisers have told me I will be shocked by what I see - there are kids begging there but we won't be able to feed them because helping 10 or 20 could lead to hundreds. One person cannot do everything but a group of people doing their bit can make a difference."

He is already planning a future trip and hoped to raise even more money next time.

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NEWS

THE BEST
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RHODES

THIS is not only the quote of the week but possibly of the century. The stand-in prime minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk tells his people: "We are on the brink of a disaster this is the government of political suicides! So welcome to hell." Now, that's what I call an election promise.

MEN and women are not always interested in the same things. Most football fans are male. A friend who attended an evening with "Psychic Sally" Morgan reports only a handful of blokes in a theatre packed with women. If the sexes have different leisure interests, why should women have the same career interests as men, especially when the career in question is notoriously laddish and aggressive? There are very few female stand-up comedians, yet the BBC has announced an end to all-male comedy panel shows. Dara O Briain, host of Mock the Week (BBC2) warns that female panellists may come to be regarded as "the token woman." Just like politics.

A FRIEND reports that not all visitors are impressed with Birmingham's new £200 million library. As he climbed the stark staircase with its white walls and strip lighting, he heard one of a group of lads complain: "This is boring, innit? It's like being back in prison."

WHAT makes a middle-aged father of four children truly happy? Time with the kids? A relaxing stroll with his wife? Seeing the new baby take its first step? Nah. Piers Morgan declared in a column two weeks ago: "I'm never happier than when bombing down Sunset Boulevard from my Beverly Hills home in my Aston Martin and Prada shades." This, from a man of 48. Morgan plumbs extraordinary depths of shallowness. His weekly dispatches from LA are an endless list of celebrities he's met, swanky restaurants he's dined in and beautiful women he has allegedly charmed. Now it's falling apart. His chat show with CNN is to be axed amid dismal ratings. For a man who adores being among the rich and famous, the future looks dull.

OUR new gravel drive, laid only a few days ago, has been turned into a lunar landscape of craters by badgers digging for grubs. The badgers moved into the nearest wood at about the time we moved into Chateau Rhodes, 30 years ago this summer. As the badgers have prospered, the crunchy, delicious hedgehogs have vanished.

I NEVER thought I'd get nostalgic for the 1980s but a rare showing at the weekend of the John Cleese comedy Clockwise (ITV3) took us back to 1986 and reminded us how much life has changed, sometimes for the worse. Back then we had some truly awful cars (remember the Austin 1100?) but glorious open roads. We had disgusting, vandalised phone boxes but everybody was much slimmer. I interviewed Cleese at the launch of Clockwise. All went well until I mentioned Monty Python's Life of Brian. "Ah, the cleverest thing we ever did," beamed Cleese. To the dismay of the PR people, we spent the rest of the interview chatting about Life of Brian, not Clockwise.

CLOCKWISE did produce one terrific quote. It comes as Cleese's character, the headmaster Brian Stimpson, realises all is not quite lost in his desperate attempt to reach a conference in Norwich. Slumped at the side of the road he tells his young travelling companion: "It's not the despair, Laura. I can take the despair. It's the hope I can't stand." We all know that feeling.

I REFERRED a few days ago to the process of sorting out the rights to oil and gas before Scotland votes on independence. A reader suggests they are leaving it to the last minute and hoping for the best, in the belief that it'll be oil rights on the night.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Pub site may become new school

AN INDEPENDENT secondary school for up to 220 girls could launch on the site of a former pub in Walsall under new plans.

The old Birchills Tavern in the town would become the IQRA Academy and will teach GCSE classes starting from September. Recently the building has been used for evening classes by a nearby mosque but a planning application to turn it into a fully operational school has

been put forward by the Pakistan Muslim Welfare Association.

The building was purchased after closing down as a pub a number of years ago. The application has been put forward by Dr Mohammed Salim Khan, from the association, and will be considered by council planners in the coming months.

He said parents had already expressed an interest in sending their youngsters there. And he added:

"The IQRA academy is a school which is being set up for girls from the Walsall Metropolitan Borough."

"We have had interest from many different areas of Walsall and mainly because alongside our mainstream education which will cover 11 GCSE subjects we have also included Arabic and Islamic studies."

"A large percentage of the students will be coming from the local area as well as North Walsall. There

has been interest expressed from Plect, Alumwell, Caldmore, Palfrey, Bescot and Darlaston."

"The school will be run independently of the mosque although it will serve the local community. It will have an independent board of governors who will be responsible for ensuring that the school meets all of its targets and our vision is that it becomes a high performing school."

Officer who fell for inmate is jailed

A prison officer's misconduct, which included a sexual relationship with an inmate, started when she found her husband had been cheating on her, a court heard.

Julie Turton, from Hembs Crescent, Hamstead, is today starting a two years and eight month sentence after being jailed yesterday.

During the 54-year-old's sentencing hearing, her defence solicitor Mr Jonathan Parker told Birmingham Crown Court her offending began after learning of the upsetting news. He said: "For the first time in her life she felt particularly isolated, her self-esteem was low, she was emotionally vulnerable, and she was susceptible to the advances of those inmates who she admits having illicit contact with."

Inmate Danny King moved to HMP Birmingham on November 3, 2011, where he met Turton who was at that time the first line manager for the prison's 'M' Wing.

The two hit it off and started a relationship that eventually became a sexual one, spending hundreds of hours on the phone and sending dozens of text messages. A love letter from

Blood block led to death

A GARDENER found dead at his home in Walsall had died from a restriction of blood supply to his heart, an inquest heard.

Simon Lazarus, aged 51, was found by his son's girlfriend lying on his sofa at his home in Lichfield Road, Brownhills, Walsall. Coroner's Court heard, Cardiac ischemia was found to be the cause of death.

He was certified dead on July 9 last year, although the inquest heard that his body was in an advanced stage of decomposition. Coroner Robin Balmain recorded Mr Lazarus had died of natural causes.

Restaurant

A restaurant in Walsall has scooped awards for most loved fine dining restaurant in the UK and best loved business in the borough.

Indian fine dining restaurant Five Rivers A La Carte was honoured in The Best Of's Local & Loved Awards 2014.

Reward put up after vandalism on railway

A £1,000 reward is being put up following four recent acts of vandalism on railway lines in the Walsall area which caused delays to thousands of passengers.

The incidents in the last fortnight have involved trespass, vandalism and suspected cable theft. The latest happened last Wednesday night when cables were damaged, resulting in disruption of services.

The knock-on effect saw train disruption during the night and into the morning.

Network Rail bosses are now putting up a reward for information leading to the prosecution of the culprits.

Liam Sumpter, area director for Network Rail, said: "Trespass, vandalism and metal theft on the railway not only causes huge amounts of disruption to passengers but also pose a significant risk to the lives of those committing the crimes."

"Trains are fast, quiet and cannot stop quickly, even if trespassers are spotted well in advance by a driver."

"Combined with 25,000v of electricity flowing through overhead lines where the railway is electrified, it is a dangerous place for anyone who is not supposed to be there."

"We have seen four incidents of trespass, vandalism and suspected cable theft in two weeks in the Walsall area and are offering a £1,000 reward to anyone who provides information

By Lisa O'Brien

which leads to a successful prosecution of those responsible.

"We apologise for the disruption these recent incidents have caused."

"We can assure passengers that we do all we can to reduce these types of incident and carry out repairs as quickly as possible when they do."

"I would urge anyone who may have any information about any railway related crime to contact the British Transport Police."

Network Rail continues to work with suppliers and other industries to make metal, particularly cables - harder to steal and easier to identify.

In and around Walsall, extra patrols have been put in place and covert surveillance is being used to deter future incidents.

Anyone with information should contact British Transport Police on 0800 40 50 40 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Business stands success

EXHIBITION stands for a popular women in business event have sold out, the organisers say. It is the second year that the seminar set up by Headz Up Business will be held.

Last year about 100 delegates attended the event at Banks's Stadium in Walsall. Speakers at the networking event tomorrow, Friday, include Christine Lester, the chief executive of the minister development centre Ltd/ West Midlands tomorrow Ltd and author Jane Noble Knight.

It starts at 9am. The cost for remaining tickets is £25 per delegate. To book contact www.headzupbusiness.co.uk

Cleaning up as firm success



Tracy, front, with employees Katrina Haskett, Sonia Davies, Katie Ball and Sophie Lote

WHEN Tracy Roberts was made redundant from the only job she had ever known, she was understandably devastated.

And when the 38-year-old failed to find a new job after more than 80 applications, she thought the future looked bleak. But with a young son to look after, she refused to give up and has now set up her own cleaning franchise.

She employs four women and has already

taken 50 bookings since starting three weeks ago. Mrs Roberts, whose call centre worker husband Phil is blind, admits recent months have been "pretty manic" but said the success has stopped her dwelling on the past.

After working as a travel agent for 22 years, she was made redundant from her job as manager at Thomas Cook in Brownhills after 12 years last August.

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Cathedral tours volunteers call

VOLUNTEERS are being urged to come forward to help lead tours of Lichfield Cathedral's tower.

The Tower Tours take place every Saturday between Easter and October. Volunteers must be over 18 and able to give at least two tours a day.

The cathedral is looking for hosts to welcome visitors to its Holy Writ museum showcasing modern Jewish, Christian and Islamic calligraphy from April 26 to June 2014. Visit www.lichfieldcathedral.org or call 01543 306140.

Gospel concert to feature singer

BLACK Country singer David Copeland will be sharing the stage with top US gospel act Fred Hammond at the Bethel Convention Centre, in Kelvin Way, West Bromwich.

The concert takes place on May 23 at 7.30pm.

Early tickets cost £20 and bookings are available at The Hub, in Walsall, on 01922 279227 and CLC Wolverhampton on 01902 424020.

Other acts include Jason Nelson, Roger Samuels, Divine Divine and Four Kornerz.

Stewing up for fundraising fun

IRISH stew and live music will be on the menu at a church fundraising night.

The band Good Traditions will be the guest performers at Delves Community Baptist Church, in Bell Lane, Walsall, for the event on March 15 at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £5 and are available at the Delves church. More details is on the website is www.delvesbaptistcc.co.uk

Countryside set to be explored

AN outing to the Cotswolds is on the cards for residents who support a community group.

Organisers at Pleck Neighbourhood Watch, in Walsall, plan to visit the area in April. The group also has regular meetings the next of which will be on March 12 at Kingsley Street Fellowship Club, in Kingsley Street, at 7.30pm.

Bowls club in plea

THE Walsall Wood Outdoor Bowls Club is looking for new members over the age of 55. Summer matches are played at the bowling green at Rushall Labour Club. Call Alan Paul on 07736 384290.

Laurence is guest at Range opening

CELEBRITY interior designer Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen will open a new home furnishing store on the site of a former discount warehouse.

Hooty's in Willenhall, which closed in December after 50 years, is being taken over by home furnishing chain The Range. The new outlet at the Longacres Industrial Estate, Rose Hill will open on April 11.

And it has been announced today that Llewellyn-Bowen, who presented Changing Rooms in the 1990s, will be appearing. A multi-million pound refurbishment is under way to transform the 70,000 sq ft site into a new store stocking more than 65,000 products.

The new store will be the 88th Range store in the UK and the third to open in 2014. Shoppers spoke of their sadness when Hooty's closed, saying it had become popular for its wide range of stock. The store was founded in 1963 by the family of Steve Smith, who sold the business in 1988 and went on to set up Poundland in 1990 before selling that for £50m in 2002.

The Range was founded by Plymouth-based entrepreneur Chris Dawson.

Lent marked at services

PREPARATIONS have been getting under way this week at churches in the borough to mark the start of lent, yesterday, which was Ash Wednesday.

At St Gabriel's, in Walstead Road, Walsall, there was a mass at 7.30pm last night, the first of weekly services on Wednesdays leading up to Easter. On Fridays there will be services featuring the Stations of the Cross at 7.30pm.

At St Paul's Church, in Darwall Street, lunch time meetings will be held on Wednesdays at 1.10pm with a guest speaker. Soup will be served.

Pub shop plan

A PUB in Bloxwich that has stood empty for two years will become a shop under new plans.

The old Thatched Tavern in Elmore Green Road would be extended as part of the proposals submitted to council bosses.

Drinking spree woman's drive was 'idiotic'

A WOMAN motorist displayed 'idiotic and dangerous' behaviour while driving through roadworks after popping out to the shops during a drinking spree, a judge heard.

Mother of three Grace Dwyer was over twice the alcohol limit when she drove into trouble on the A5 near her Bloxwich home, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The 26-year-old ignored a stop sign and refused to wait for a special escort before going through the road works at more than the emergency 5mph speed limit, it was revealed. Miss Alka Brigue, prosecuting, explained: "The road was being resurfaced

and about 50 workers were employed in the area along with a number of heavy vehicles.

"Cones, bollards and signs warned of the partial closure of the road. Some of the workers had to get out of the way as she went by."

Dwyer was forced to stop by a passing police car after the incident that occurred on October 17, the court heard. The mother gave one breath test that registered 75 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath – the legal limit is 35 – but refused to take the follow up check that is required by law.

She later explained that she had been

drinking at home with a friend before deciding to drive to a supermarket to buy medicine for one of her children who was unwell. Dwyer – who left the young children with her friend – told police: "Nobody jumped out of the way but road workers may have had to move onto the central reservation. I did not drive at anybody."

She was alone in the car on the way to the Tesco store where she met two men she knew and was giving them a lift home when stopped on the return journey, the court was told. Miss Brigue observed: "The two male passengers also appeared to be under the influence of alcohol." Mr Oliver

Woolhouse, defending, said: "It was an act of sheer stupidity for her to get into her car and drive off to the shops after drinking."

Dwyer from Tamworth Close, Brownhills pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and failing to provide a sample. She was given a six month jail sentence, suspended under supervision for a year with 80 hours unpaid work. She was also banned from driving for 12 months and ordered to pay £200 costs.

Recorder Keith Raynor told her: "People resurfacing roads work in difficult and dangerous conditions providing a service to us all. Your behaviour was idiotic, dangerous and foolish."

Beloved Ben's brave smile lives on for proud family

BRAVE schoolboy Ben Sambrook, who has spent the past seven years fighting a brain tumour, has sadly died.

The 14-year-old was today described as a 'remarkable and talented boy'. Tributes have been pouring in to the teenager, who attended Aldridge School, with many calling him an inspiration to others.

Ben was diagnosed with a brain tumour the size of a golf ball when he was seven and underwent gruelling treatment.

In 2012 he suffered a relapse. He died at home and in a statement, Ben's parents Sharon and Steve, who is known as Sam, said: "As a family we are devastated. The void left an emptiness we feel is unbearable, part of us has died too."

His headteacher at Aldridge School, David Mountney said he was a 'clearly loved friend to all who met him.'

His family set up the Ben Sambrook Trust Fund following his diagnosis and it has raised more than £100,000 over the past few years.

Friends have also paid tributes to him online, with one saying 'heaven gained an angel and we lost a soldier'.

Ben's plight touched the people of Aldridge, with scores inspired to raise cash through fundraising galas and amazing charity feasts.

Diagnosis

On the fundraising page set up following his diagnosis, his family wrote: "We set up this fund as a celebration of Ben's bravery and courage against all odds and to give hope to others as he continues to light up our lives and the lives of those around him. We now feel that despite the desperate situation we continue to find ourselves in we are doing something positive. For us, this means Ben's illness has not been in vain."

Ben underwent weeks of radiotherapy, months of chemotherapy and operations to fight the tumour. But there was joy when the youngster was given a clean bill of health, returning to the hospital every four months for regular scans.

On his fundraising page, his family spoke of the 'dread and fear of the tumour returning'. In 2012, their worst fears were realised when Ben relapsed. But despite his ordeal,



Ben Sambrook has died after battling a brain tumour for seven years

Ben was known for being generous, funny, good company and always having a smile on his face.

Back in 2009, Ben was named an Express & Star Local Hero after never having missed a day of school despite his years of treatment. At the time, he was attending Cooper & Jordan School in Aldridge.

He was presented with an award and, along with his parents and sister, was invited to Molineux to be presented with his accolade and enjoy a meal surrounded by Wolves players.

Ben said he was 'chuffed with the award' and was looking forward to going to the Molineux – despite being a Birmingham City



Ben, aged 10, with mum Sharon and his local hero award

fan. Speaking at the time, his mother said:

"The Trust has also taken off beyond all of our expectations." Sharon herself was even named Tesco charitable mother of the year in March 2012 and was invited to a reception with Prime Minister David Cameron.

She was given the award after being secretly nominated by Ben.

Ben's school friends have been inspired to raise money in his name. Last month, they staged a BENeFit gig at the school in aid of the Brain Tumour Charity. It was sponsored by local businesses and many of his friends provided the music. The packed out hall at Aldridge School included many of his friends and family including his grandpar-

ents and his 11-year-old sister Emily.

Although Ben was too ill to attend, he was sent clips via the internet. A DVD of the gig was recorded and will soon be available for his friends. Together with cake sales, a sponsored silence and a dance show held at the school, his friends have raised more than £3,500.

A Facebook page called RIP Ben Sambrook has been set up, where friends have left their tributes and memories of Ben. Lucy Earl said: "You were an inspiration to us all and will be greatly missed but never forgotten." Shakira Mason added: "Ben was amazing, and it is cruel that he was taken so early on in his life."

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

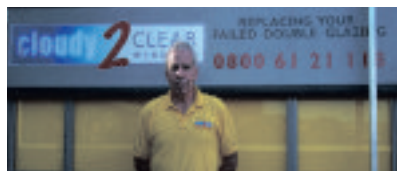
We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

HOW depressing that Apprentice runner-up Luisa Zissman has had her Ferrari vandalised. And even more depressing that some idiot on Twitter suggested it was a form of 'karma' for having the effrontery to drive such a vehicle.

Are some people just born with a chip on the shoulder, or does society just turn them that way?

In typically robust fashion, Zissman replied: "I hope when you buy one someday because you've worked hard someone does it to you!"

But the chances of such people ever working hard for anything are about as likely as Helen Flanagan becoming president of Mensa.

Still, I surely can't be the only one who is wondering how a baker who did not even win Lord Sugar's prized investment is now in the Ferrari league.

That is a lot of cupcakes.

DAYBREAK, the ITV breakfast television service which shares its name with the old TV-am early morning news show from the 1980s, is in line for another revamp.

It is now going to be renamed, er Good Morning Britain, after another TV-am breakfast show from 30 years ago, and is going to be presented by Susanna Reid, who appears to have been poached from the BBC on the basis that she is good at ballroom dancing.

Talk about back to the 80s. I suppose we should be glad that nobody thought it a good idea to bring back Cyles Brandreth and his garish sweaters, but it does highlight a lack of creativity and original thinking. And if they really do think that 1983 represented some golden era in breakfast broadcasting, there is one crucial ingredient they have overlooked.

Let's have Roland Rat doing the paper reviews. Now that would have people tuning in.

NEWCASTLE United manager Alan Pardew is in hot water after going head-to-head with Hull City midfielder David Meyler.

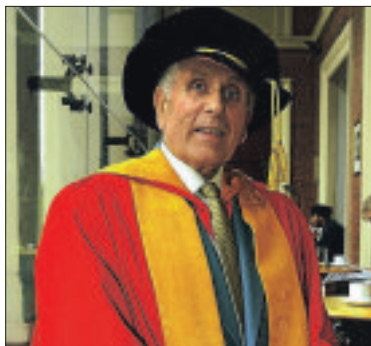
His touchline contretemps has landed him with a £100,000 fine. Or a weekend, as Wayne Rooney would call it.

Personally, I think he has been a bit hard done by. After all, a spot of head-to-head contact is usually seen as a gesture of affection up in horse-fighter land.

And I'm sure he was really only offering a coaching lesson in ball control.

JUST 10 days ago, glassy-eyed Russian president Vladimir Putin was the smiling host of the winter Olympic games. The following weekend, he appeared to be gearing up for a full-scale invasion of the Crimea.

Didn't somebody once say that a week was a long time in politics?



Lord Bilston, Dennis Turner seen in his robes



With Annie Kemmies, 79, at Cradley Labour club in 1974



With his Honorary Freeman of the City scroll in 2006

Lord who never forgot his roots

DANIEL WAINWRIGHT looks back at the life of former MP and peer Lord Bilston who has died at 71

IT is hard to imagine another politician more deserving of the title 'man of the people' than Dennis Turner.

Even when elevated to the House of Lords, he took the town of his birth as his name, Baron Bilston.

And when he served as MP for Wolverhampton South East around 300 people took to the streets at the end of his first term of office to campaign for his re-election.

The crusade succeeded, with the number of votes for Dennis Turner in 1992 almost double those of his Conservative rival.

Fast forward 22 years and it would be unthinkable, in the post-expenses scandal 'they're all the same' cynicism of 2014 that any MP would have such a strong following.

But Dennis Turner, honoured last year with a Famous Sons and Daughters of Wolverhampton award, was from a different era, when more working class people were chosen by their communities to represent them in Westminster. He was an extremely well-liked politician, for whom successive Express & Star lobby reporters based in the House of Commons developed a fondness and friendship.

He was born, raised and educated in Bradley. And he lived there all his life.

He would become a staunch union man who believed strongly in a fair deal for working people.

He was educated at St Martin's C of E School, in Slater Street, then at Stonefield Secondary (later Hall Green Comprehensive, then Bilston High School and now South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy), in Prosser Street.

He left to work at Thomas Perry steel



The newly-elected MP for Wolverhampton South East seen in 1987

roll makers, in Highfields Road, as an office boy making tea and doing chores, then studied office accounting at Bilston College before joining the Betterware kitchen equipment company as a salesman when he was 17.

Going door to door in the 1950s and 1960s, and seeing the poor conditions of slum housing, gave Lord Bilston the interest he would have in politics for the rest of his life and the belief that he could help to make things better.

In 1964 he moved into the Bilston steel industry, beginning as a stock-taker, and later as transport controller.

And two years later, he was first elected to the Wolverhampton Borough Council at the age of 22. He was chosen to be the deputy leader of the council in 1980, a position he held for six years until his decision to stand for Parliament. Lord Bilston also served on the now-defunct West Midlands County Council from 1973 until 1986.

He chaired the Joint Trade Union Action Committee which had fought the long and ultimately doomed battle to stop the closure of Bilston Steelworks. He was at the forefront of the five-year fight to save the works from the axe in

the late 1970s, and was devastated when it closed with the loss of thousands of jobs. "It was traumatic to see the demise of the steel industry," he once recalled. "I don't think I will ever see such a catastrophic effect on the people of this area."

So popular was he among his political peers that in 1987, when he first won the Wolverhampton South East seat, even members of the Tory party had contributed to his campaign fund. As a Wolverhampton councillor at the time he was given a China piggy bank by Conservative Paddy Bradley when he resigned his seat to begin his campaign.

He continued to fight hard for his people. In 1993 he gathered 5,000 signatures on two petitions, 2,500 on each, campaigning against plans to impose VAT on fuel and another against threats to strip pensioners of free travel passes.

Identity

Just a few years ago his time and power was called upon again when Bilston itself looked to be bureaucratically torn apart in a review of Parliamentary boundaries.

The town was set to be represented by four different MPs, something that risked its very identity.

Dennis, along with his brother Bert, a councillor and at the time mayor of Wolverhampton, led the charge. They took a coachload of people to a Boundary Commission hearing in Birmingham to plead their case. And they won.

The stroke he suffered in May 2006 affected the use of his right arm and leg, but he recovered and carried on his duties in the Lords. The following year he was granted Freedom of the City.

But despite his huge political profile he was a family man at heart. He leaves his devoted wife Pat, 67, two grown up children, Brendon and Jenny, and a granddaughter, Bella. Last year, the old Labour firebrand Dennis Skinner highlighted Dennis Turner as the sort of person that voters just do not see enter politics anymore and sadly, will not again.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1984

FOOTBALL Association chief Bert Millichip called for urgent meetings with the Home Secretary following disgraceful scenes of violence from England fans in France. Former West Bromwich Albion chairman Mr Millichip said he was appalled by the behaviour of the fans which left 15 people needing hospital treatment, two of them seriously ill.

TONY Benn was back in Parliament less than a year after losing his Bristol seat. The former cabinet minister won a by-election in Chesterfield. But Labour leader Neil Kinnock's joy at retaining Chesterfield was tempered by reports Mr Benn was already set to rock the boat, demanding new policies stripping the Queen of her constitutional powers, removing the Prime Minister's right to appoint and remove cabinet ministers, and abolishing the House of Lords.

1994

A PETROL station attendant used his mobile phone to dial for freedom after armed raiders locked him in a toilet. Two gun-wielding robbers forced Arshad Hussain into a toilet at the Elf Service Station in Moxley before making off with nearly £2,000. Mr Hussain used his mobile to call police.

A PILOT died at the controls of his cargo plane after its engines failed. The four-engined Vickers Viscount plummeted out of the sky in blizzards at Stowe-by-Chartley, between Stafford and Uttoxeter. The pilot had battled to avoid hitting homes.

DETECTIVES excavating the house of Gloucester builder Fred West believed they had discovered the corpses of two women who disappeared during the 1970s. One of them was identified as former Wolverhampton schoolgirl Shirley Robinson. A third body was believed to be West's 16-year-old daughter, last seen in 1987. West, aged 52, was charged with three murders.

2004

AN edgy play was causing controversy. Everyman - An Immortality Play, focused on holidaymakers in a Spanish hotel, and featured foul language and female nudity. But the Conservative group leader of Wolverhampton Council, Councillor Mrs Paddy Bradley, was not impressed by the production due at the city's Arena Theatre. "There is no respect left for life or women's bodies in the world any more," she said.

FORMER Walsall schoolboy Steven Knight was waving the flag for the West Midlands at the Oscars but he missed out on one of the famous statues when his play Dirty Pretty Things was pipped to the post.

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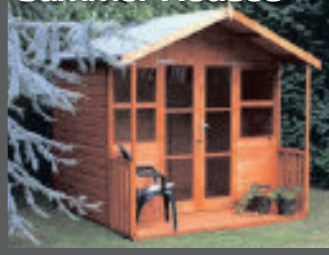
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Baffled by claims made in letter

I WISH to respond to a letter, headlined "Baffled by backing" published in the name of R Jukes. Firstly, AB Waste is currently situated in Cemetery Road, in the Bently/Darlaston North Ward, not in the ward that I represent which is Darlaston South ward.

I refute totally the suggestion by R Jukes that I have supported or am supporting any planning application by AB Waste relating to a Bloxwich site. Indeed, as a member of the Planning Committee I am well aware that I should not and could not make a public statement in support or against a planning application and then be allowed to

take part and vote on such an application. I am duty bound to "take no side" on any possible application prior to it coming to the Planning Committee. Otherwise I would be disqualified from taking part in the consideration of such an application and barred from exercising my vote on any such application. I would therefore advise R Jukes to turn his/her energies towards the 6 Councillors for Birchills Leamore and Bloxwich West regarding views held relating to any planning application in their area.

CLLR PAUL BOTT
Independent - Darlaston South Ward

PM should now act on our behalf

WHEN will this government start acting on behalf of the people, whom they are supposed to represent, instead of constantly worrying about what the EU and others will say?

As I remember it, we joined the Common Market in order to be part of an integrated trade organisation (the clue is in the name!), not a federal state run from Brussels, dominated by France and Germany!

As a result, we have lost control over our own destiny and the power to self-govern and the attempt to black-mail us into voting Tory at the next General Election by way of promising an EU referendum, after it has all but faded into oblivion!

Politics and politicians have lost their credibility both here in Britain and further afield which is a cause for concern and like many other things in life today winning at any/all cost is all that matters.

I fear, for the future of our children and grandchildren!

A KYTE, Great Wyrley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Walsall
@expressandstar.co.uk

Confusion reigns over Scots in EU

PETER Rhodes envisages a situation in which "The Scots... vote for independence and then immediately apply to join the EU."

I am puzzled. If Scotland became independent, the country which joined the predecessor to the EU as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would no longer exist. Consequently, if Scotland needed to reapply to join the EU, presumably the other new country, the United Kingdom of Northern Ireland and Southern Great Britain, would also need to reapply.

Which of those countries would be more welcome to Frau Merkel, M. Hollande, Dr Renzi or their successors:

that led by the Europhile Mr Salmond, or that led by Mr Cameron with his constant threats of renegotiations and referendums? Rhodes is in any case wrong to assert that "the Scots" will vote. The electorate will be residents in Scotland entitled to vote in the UK. English people living in Scotland will have a vote. Scots living outside Scotland will not.

Inconsistent? No! Alex Salmond's pitch for independence is: "No more Tory governments. Ever." That would get my vote as a resident in Scotland. Trouble is, for residents in the rest of the UK it could mean "Tory governments. Forever."

A T HARRISON,
Walsall

Fishing out the drinkers

A MAN taking part in the drinking game Neknomination drank a pint of Vodka with two goldfish in it.

Is this harmless fun? Five people have been killed by lethal alcoholic cocktails participating in the new game. Social media has played a large part in promoting the craze which places alcohol more central in our lives than is healthy.

Young people are being introduced to a world where drinking is very much part of an everyday agenda. Neknomination combines two of the most common anxieties about young people - booze and online bullying.

Abuse of alcohol is commonplace. Only please as parents teach your children about alcohol. It may save a life and perhaps keep goldfish safe too!

CLLR DOUG JAMES

Walsall

Immigration talks needed

WALSALL North MP David Winnick was right to encourage more people to register to vote as part of the 'Bite the Ballot' campaign. At 56 per cent Walsall North has an embarrassingly low voter turnout.

But, it's unfortunate Mr Winnick doesn't recognise the importance of public debate. I was disappointed to find that the scheduled Walsall College debate on immigration was called off as Labour was not interested.

It's time someone gave local people a chance to have an open and honest discussion about who we do and don't open our doors to.

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NEWS

Burglar in appeal told sentence is a fair one

AN opportunistic burglar who ransacked the home of a vulnerable pensioner has been told by top judges his sentence was 'stern' but fair.

Stuart Clayton smashed his way into the home of an 84-year-old man when he realised it was empty, and turned the place upside down before fleeing the scene with cash and cigarettes.

The 21-year-old, of Basets Road, Wednesbury, was jailed for two years at Wolverhampton Crown Court in November last year, after he admitted burglary.

However he launched a bid to have his sentence cut at London's Criminal Appeal Court, with his lawyers arguing it was 'too long' for his crime.

Now though his appeal was rejected by three of the country's most senior judges, who said the sentence was 'stern, but not excessive'.

The court heard the pensioner left his home on the Yew Tree estate on the border of Walsall and Sandwell one evening in August last year. When he returned home around two hours later he found the whole house had been ransacked.

by Simon Stone

He discovered his bathroom window had been smashed and £400 cash and £60 worth of cigarettes had gone missing.

Clayton initially denied any wrongdoing, but admitted his guilt after being confronted with the forensic evidence.

The court heard he had a record of similar offences.

His lawyers argued his jail term was over the top, saying he didn't have the worst record. But Mr Justice Griffith Williams, sitting with Lord Justice Fulford and Judge David Griffith Jones QC, said: "The view of this court is that, while the sentence was at the top of the range, it cannot be said that it was arguably manifestly excessive."

Simon welcomed back into the fold



Former art and design student Simon Goode after his return to Walsall college to offer his expertise

A FORMER Midlands student who launched Britain's first centre for book arts returned to his old college to inspire others.

Simon Goode left Walsall College in 2003 after completing a diploma in art and design and went in to open the London Centre for Book Arts.

It is an open-access educational and resource centre dedicated to book arts and aims to keep book-making skills alive by offering teaching in bookbinding, letterpress printing and papermaking.

The 30 year-old recently returned to the college's Wisemore Campus to hold a presentation and workshop day.

He taught students on the foundation art and design course on how to build a concertina book and various individual book art constructions. Lecturer Sue Krejzl said: "It was great to have Simon back at Walsall College. His talk and the day overall was completely inspirational."

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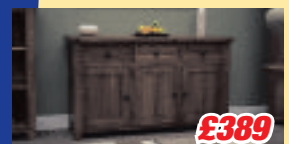
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NEWS

Blind support group to axe minibus service

Town talent in focus again



Last year's winner Sophie Rose is girl with shield in the middle

ENTERTAINERS are wanted for a talent competition set up to give aspiring musicians a chance to shine. Willenhall's Got Talent will be held at the town's Gilbert's nightclub, in Field Street on March 28, at 7pm. It will be the third time the popular community event is being held. The competition is for 11s to 19s, or up to 25 for performers with disabilities. Last year's winner was

singer Sophie Rose, aged 15, who won a recording session at A Flat Studios and a shield for her efforts. The event also raised £400 to support gifted and talented children from Willenhall.

Organiser Willenhall South Councillor Diane Coughlan said interested residents should contact 01902 605289 or email via coughlan@Walsall.gov.uk

MINIBUSES used by a charity to transport blind and partially sighted people to social meetings will be axed later this year.

Walsall Society for the Blind runs social groups at a day centre in Hatherton Road four days a week, allowing people to make friends, play games and enjoy a lunch.

The charity, which supports more than 1,700 people in the borough, has been running two minibuses for the past 10 years but has announced it intends to axe the door-to-door service in June due to dwindling numbers attending the groups.

Bosses said using the minibuses was no longer a viable option and the charity was looking at the use of volunteer drivers and setting up partnerships with taxi firms.

But Charlotte Morris, who is partially sighted and has been using the day centre services for 11 years, said axing the transport would affect the most vulnerable people using the services.

Socialise

The 81-year-old, of Coalway Road, Bloxwich, said: "I go once or twice a week and there's usually 18 to 20 of us. They fetch us in and bring us home. We have a dinner and there's games. It's a chance for people to socialise. If I had to get a taxi from where I live in Bloxwich to the town centre, it would cost £7 each way, but there's one lady that goes who is nearly 97. She's not only blind, but she's hard of hearing as well. You can't expect people like that to use the bus."

Amanda Reed, chief executive officer for Walsall Society for the Blind, said: "Unfortunately running the minibuses is no longer a viable option and we will cease to run our door-to-door minibus service as of June 30. We will be working with all those affected by the removal of transport to support them in continuing to access the day centre."

It also offers befriending services and a talking newspaper service. Anyone who can help can call the charity on 01922 627683 or email hawleyhouse@wsfb.co.uk



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MEMORY LANE



One of the pictures showing the destruction which will be on display at the library



The Daily Sketch article with pictures of the victims



Amateur historian Derek Nicholls who has put together the Zeppelins exhibition

Devastating night of the Zeppelins that left its mark on Black Country

by Mark Andrews

IT WAS just a normal night in the Black Country, or as normal as any night was during the dark days of the First World War.

The trams clattered through the streets, folk flocked to the cinemas. The lights were ablaze as people went about their business as usual.

Then the Zeppelins came. Dozens were killed as bomb after bomb pounded down on Tipton, Wednesbury, Bileston and Walsall. Buildings were ripped apart as death rained down from the skies. A devastated husband returned from the pictures to find three generations of his family had perished in the carnage. The Black Country had never seen anything like it.

Amateur historian Derrick Nicholls has spent 18 months researching the devastating raids of 98 years ago, putting together an exhibition at Tipton Library.

Among the artefacts Mr Nicholls, a 71-year-old retired newsagent, has gathered together, is a police notice advising the public what to do in the event of an air raid.

It suggests keeping a bucket of sand or water to hand in the upstairs bedrooms, in order to tackle any small fires that may break out.

"All windows and doors on the lower floor should be closed to prevent the admission of noxious gases," added police commissioner Mr E R Henry.

Destruction came to the Black Country on a foggy, frosty night on January 31, 1916, when a fleet of German Zeppelin airships were making their way to attack Liverpool.

But in the misty conditions and heavy clouds, two of nine aircraft – the L21 and L19 – became lost over the Midlands. Zeppelin L21 was commanded by 45-year-old Kapitänleutnant Max Dietrich. He had thought he was flying over the Irish Sea but had been mistaken by sparsely populated areas of countryside.

On his orders, the crew of 16 dropped their deadly payload from the skies on an unsuspecting public largely unaware of

their imminent fate. Bombs were initially believed to have hit Union Street in Tipton, with around five of the devices falling all around.

One also fell outside Tipton railway station and more around Barnfield Road trading estate. In Union Street, two houses were demolished and others damaged, the gas main was set alight. In all 14 people were killed in the town as the bombs struck at around 8 o'clock that night.

Treatment

News reports at the time were subject to military censorship, and the Express & Star was only allowed to describe the Black Country raids as being in Staffordshire.

An inquest was held jointly for 13 of the victims of the Tipton bombing on February 3. The 14th victim Louisa York, who worked as nurse, had been taken for treatment at Dudley Guest Hospital and her inquest was held elsewhere. The ruling from the inquest on the death certificates states 'Wilful murder against the Kaiser of Germany and his son the Crown Prince as being accessory to

and after the fact' at the insistence of the inquest jury. A young couple, Maud and William Fellows, who were unmarried but had the same name, were killed after one bomb hit as they walked along a canal tow-path in nearby Bradley.

Their death is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the Bradley pumping station.

Mr Nicholls, of Beverston Road, has been holding an exhibition at Tipton Library, bringing together the images and stories through trawling the archives, including those of the Express & Star for the exhibition. At the time, the Express & Star reported that 26 people had been killed instantly during the night, but Mr Nicholls' research found the death toll was significantly higher. Mr Nicholls says a total of 33 people were killed in the raid.

Mr Nicholls is now considering putting together a book of his research. The exhibition, which returns to the library from March 13 to 28, was put together to coincide with a special community opera, Zeppelin Dreams which runs at the Wolverhampton Grand on March 20 and 21.



Survivors take a look at a crater in Bradford Place, Walsall



L21 Zeppelins were used to bomb the Black Country

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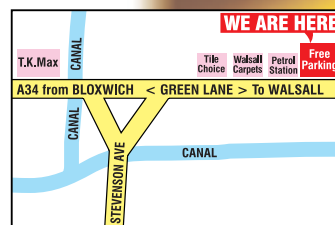


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CLUB NEWS

Castle the venue for first outing

PELSALL E TG

TUTBURY Castle, near Burton-on-Trent, was the venue for the club's first outing in 2014.

The curator Lesley Smith gave a fascinating talk about witchcraft, and looked the part too, in 'tatty' dress, bare feet and tousled hair. This was followed by a cream tea, where a transformed Lesley chatted at length about the castle's history and her forthcoming wedding.

During the formal section of the February meeting members were informed of the change of venue for the Federation Dinner on March 27. It will now be held at the Masonic Hall, Aldridge.

As the meeting on the March 20 is the AGM, when a new committee will be elected, retiring officers were presented with bouquets in appreciation of their work and dedication over several years.

Speaker Tony Hunt spoke in detail about the notorious Dr Palmer, the Rugeley Poisoner, who was hanged outside Stafford Gaol on June 14 1856.

The raffle was won by Jane Fraser and the competition for a wooden object was won by Ann Sale's antique cigarette dispenser.

Pelsall Guild meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7.45pm at Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, Pelsall. For more, contact Val Walker on 01922 684724, or Margaret Worrall on 01922 682466.

Pair bridge gap at annual tournament



From left, John Sheppard, Keith Perry and Michael Dainty

SEDGLEY Bridge Club held their annual bridge championship and the winning pair were John Sheppard and Michael Dainty.

They are pictured with the Tipton And Coseley trophies, presented to them by Keith Perry.

Sedgley Bridge Club meets every Thursday afternoon and guests and new members are always welcome.

The venue is the Sedgley and District

SEDGLEY BRIDGE CLUB

Community Centre, Ladies Walk, Sedgley. Besides duplicate on Thursday, rubber bridge is played at the centre on a Wednesday afternoon. Friday afternoon is a learner and improvers' session.

For more information, ring Stanley on 01902 561908 or Keith on 01902 671728.

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short notice and giving such a very entertaining and interesting talk.

County Chairman Denise Moreton has accepted an invitation to come along to the Group Meeting hosted by Sharsheill on April 10 when Sue Clegg will talk about "The History of Dabs". The

Bistro has been booked for the annual dinner on March 24 and for the Summer Saunter on August 21.

The club has been invited to take part in the Sharsheill Church Flower Festival from June 13 to 15. Next month's speaker will be Ben Gamble of Cattlestones who will talk about the life of an auctioneer.



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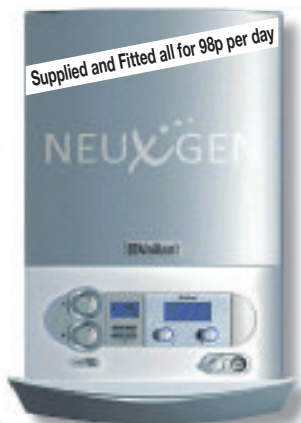
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NEWS

Standing ovation for youngsters in musical



The cast of musical Annie, which was staged by a Sunday school alongside two primary schools

YOUNGSTERS enjoyed standing ovations and almost sell-out shows when they staged a string of musical performances.

A group of youngsters who attend Sunday school at St Giles Church, Willenhall, teamed up with pupils from St Giles Primary School and Oak Meadow Primary in Wednesfield to stage Annie.

Around 30 youngsters and adults formed the cast for the shows, which were staged at St Giles Primary School.

Oak Meadow Primary teacher Paul Ingles, who runs the Sunday school – Sunday's Kool, said the shows had been a big success.

The 40-year-old, of Willenhall, said: "Over the years we've done lots of various projects with the Sunday school.

"We've done various shows but this year we have made it a community type thing.

Donation "Grandparents and siblings have all helped out. Our oldest cast member performing has been 77. He plays the President of the United States.

"It has also raised money for our Sunday school and we will be making

a donation to the church's charity, St Giles Hospice.

"You can get about 75 people into the school hall and the show nearly sold out every night. They have had standing ovations. It's been really, really good."

He said: "We started rehearsing at the beginning of November so it has been three months in the making.

"The kids have worked hard and thoroughly enjoyed it. There's been a lot of support from both schools and the church."

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NEWS

No waiting as scheme is on track, say chiefs

THESE dramatic images reveal the extent of the transformation that HS2 could make to the centre of Birmingham.

Experts hope the new city centre station will give the economy a £1.3 billion annual boost and create 14,000 jobs.

The Birmingham Curzon HS2 masterplan will transform 141 hectares and was has been unveiled by Birmingham City Council.

At the heart of the scheme will be a new city centre station - Birmingham Curzon - where HS2 will terminate on its 49-minute journey from London.

Developments surrounding the station will make this one of the largest urban regeneration schemes in Britain, and the largest redevelopment so far announced on the back of the high-speed line.

Proposals include the creation of over 14,000 jobs, 600,000 sq metres of new employment space and 2,000 new homes.

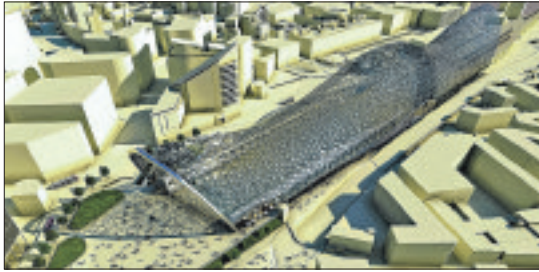
Council chiefs say the massive cash injection will support the city's creative, learning and research sectors and the booming professional and financial services industry.

The unveiling of the plans came despite cross-party backing for the £42 billion line being thrown into doubt. Tory and Labour MPs from flood and storm ravaged constituencies said they would refuse to support the line unless major improvements were made to the West Country railway network.

City leaders in Birmingham however hailed the potential of HS2 as a catalyst for urban regeneration and called on political leaders to push ahead with the rail scheme and help unlock growth across the country. The Curzon HS2 Masterplan is the latest multi-million pound boost for Birmingham's city centre. The £600



The new Curzon envisaged station in Birmingham under the impressive canopy



The remarkable-looking building which will be part of the HS2 masterplan

million transformation of New Street Station will be completed next year along with a £128 million Midland Metro extension linking the station with the tram line at Snow Hill.

Proposals have also been tabled for Paradise Circus in the heart of the city including a second Metro tram extension continuing on from New Street Station to Centenary Square.

Eastside City Park was the first new

city centre park in Birmingham for more than 130 years when it opened right next to Curzon Street in December 2012, and the critically-acclaimed £188 Library of Birmingham opened last year - proving a magnet for tourists and a centre for learning since.

Sir Albert Bore, leader of Birmingham City Council said: "We're not waiting around for HS2 to get built before we get started."

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NEWS

Andy on run for autism



CANNOCK PIC DAVID HAMILTON COPYRIGHT EXPRESS&STAR 23/02/14 Helping (right) Andrew Mar-

A PE teacher is tackling the London Marathon in April and says he is inspired to do so by the children at his school.

It will be the fourth time Andrew Marlowe, an ex-professional footballer, has taken part in the 26-mile race. The 40-year-old from Heath Hayes, who teaches at Jane Lane School in Bentley, Walsall, has chosen to raise money for the charity Autism Concern.

"I teach at a special school and a lot of the kids have autism," he said. "I've done the London Marathon three times before. Each time I choose a different charity."

"Autism Concern is a charity close to my heart." Keen runner Mr Marlowe used to be on the books at Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest, and has played for the England under-20s.

He then played non league football before retiring and becoming a teacher. He has worked at Jane Lane School for the past eight years.

He continued: "I'm hoping to raise around £2,000. I'm already in training and doing two runs a week."

"I'm really looking forward to it. There is always a great atmosphere at the London Marathon. That's why I do it. It's a great occasion." Mr Marlowe is being sponsored by Flames Indian restaurant in Penkridge.

Waste firm move fight gets backed by Winnick

A CAMPAIGN to stop a controversial waste company relocating to a new site in Walsall has received the backing of an MP.

Walsall North MP David Winnick said if AB Waste opened up a waste recycling centre in Bloxwich it would have a "devastating effect" on nearby residents. More than 200 people have signed a petition against the plans lodged for a vacant industrial site in Willenhall Lane.

Around 100 people also attended two recent campaign meetings.

Now Mr Winnick has written to Walsall Council expressing his strong opposition to the application. He said: "All those who spoke at the two meetings said it would be totally inappropriate for such an application to be approved by the local authority."

"The point was repeatedly made that the plant, which will apparently process up to 175,000 tons of waste a year and be in operation 24 hours a day, will have a devastating effect on the environment and their quality of life. My view equally is that the residents are fully justified in opposing the planning application, bearing in mind all the negative effects

which are bound to arise if the recycling plant came into operation."

"Though the company will attempt to give guarantees over minimising all the inconvenience, and generally the adverse impact of what is intended, it must be obvious that it would undoubtedly cause the maximum harm and inconvenience to my constituents who will be affected."

"It is to be hoped therefore that those who will decide on the application in due course will recognise that such a plant, which as I understand it has been unwelcome in Darlaston, is also certainly unwanted where it now intends to move to."

by Craig Hughes

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2U

FOCUS ON ALDRIDGE

Boss gives victims of floods aid

A BUSINESSMAN has delivered 1,000 sandbags and 10 tons of sand to help victims of flood-hit properties.

Jimmy Spices Restaurant's head of operations Ranjit Choongh, from Cannock, decided to help those in need after watching homes affected by rising water levels on TV.

He got in contact with Spelthorne Borough Council in Staines-upon-Thames and made a trip to Surrey to deliver the sandbags and sand. He was helped by Darren Gill, who owns D Gill Building Supplies in Aldridge who gave him a discounted price.

The restaurant spent £1,000 - including £500 raised by staff at the restaurants. Mr Choongh said: "We are very fortunate that we live in the Midlands where we escape the majority of the bad weather and natural disasters."

Rosie's walk event details

A CHARITY Walk and Festival in memory of Aldridge teenager Rosie Ross, who was fatally stabbed in 2001, will be held on July 13 at Aldridge Airport.

Flower Power and the 1960s will be the theme of Rosie's Walk. Walsall band Enticement will be performing along with other acts. The walk will feature a choice of a one-mile stroll or a three-mile walk, with The Longhorn pub on the route.

£3m project for cemetery returns in latest plans

FRESH proposals have been put forward for a new private cemetery which was rejected last year. The £3 million scheme had been earmarked for land near Aldridge.

It was thrown out after more than 1,000 objections were lodged against the proposals. But it has emerged that the applicant has relaunched a bid to turn the land into a cemetery which would have almost 8,000 plots.

He believes that the reasons that led to Walsall Council refusing the plans have now been resolved.

Flood and ground assessments have been carried out and it is also proposed that more trees will be planted to keep a reception building at the 4.3 hectare site more hidden from the roadway.

A new planning application has been submitted to council chiefs and it will be considered within the next few months.

When proposals for a new cemetery were first revealed at the end of 2012 there was a backlash with more than 1,200 names added to a petition. Some 98 individual letters were sent in opposition to the Aldridge Road Burial Park scheme and up to 300 people attended a public meeting to discuss the application.

There were concerns over the change of use of the agricultural use as it was off a busy route. People were

by Craig Hughes

worried it would lead to traffic problems and they were also concerned about the loss of green belt and that the land would be susceptible to flooding.

Although the latest application is largely similar, Aamer Waheed, who is also behind the Walsall Burial Park in Burntwood, said the main issues have been resolved. "There is a need for more burial spaces," he said. "Whatever the reason for refusal the last time we have addressed it. There are no residents on the other side so it doesn't impact on them."

The Butts & Hatherton Residents Association has now produced a leaflet to flag up that the plans have been resolved. It states: "As we informed you previously the cemetery application would come back and it has. We will be coming round with a new petition."



Aamer Waheed at the proposed cemetery site on Aldridge Road. He says previous issues have been resolved

Jumpstart for battery company

THREE former employees of a battery company that went into liquidation suddenly last year have launched their own firm, with plans to create jobs over the coming year.

Aldridge-based Battery Distribution Group, which supplied automotive batteries, went into liquidation in December after suffering financial difficulties, with up to 20 staff losing their jobs. But former employees Nigel Smith, Keith Hoffman, both of Birmingham, and Alison Rochelle, of Bloxwich, have invested £34,000 in a similar business.

Battery Solutions Midlands Ltd launched at Empire Business Park, off Brickyard Road, Aldridge, earlier this month. Managing director Mr Smith said the firm was already receiving a lot of support from local businesses.

Alert after tyre on fire

FIRE crews found a single tyre alight when they rushed to reports of flames at a roadside.

The tyre was said to be set on fire by children on a grass verge, in Aldridge Road in Walsall.

Also last Wednesday night, firefighters were called to tackle a bonfire in Bloxwich Road, Leamore. But on arrival, a resident had already put it out.

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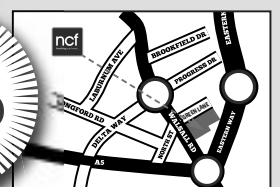
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What's On!

1960s and 70s pop legend returns

A HITMAKER of the rock 'n' roll era who found success again in the 1970s, Neil Sedaka, is back to tour the UK this autumn.

The 74-year-old New Yorker will be celebrating more than 50 years in popular music, success which began in 1959 with Oh! Carol. He had early 60s hits with Calendar Girl, Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen and signature song Breaking Up Is Hard To Do.

Sedaka relaunched his career in the 1970s, enjoying hits with Laughter in The Rain, Love Will Keep Us Together and Solitaire. He also co-wrote Peter Kay's favourite (Is This The Way To) Amarillo.

He is in concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall on November 3. Tickets are £50 and £45 plus fees. Call 0121 345 0600.

Bad Shepherds date for summer

COMEDIAN and singer Ade Edmondson is bringing his band back to the Black Country this summer.

Adrian Edmondson and the Bad Shepherds, who play punk rock songs on traditional instruments in a folk style, will be in concert at the Robin 2 in Bilston on June 15.

Advance tickets are £19.50 and the price on the door will be £22. Call 01902 401211.

Edmondson came to fame in the 1980s as punk student Vyvan in TV series The Young Ones. The 57-year-old won Celebrity Masterchef last year and presents Ade In Britain.

Bubl  about to burst onto the scene to wow NIA fans

A brass task for revival

ACTORS visited the Black Country Living Museum to prepare for their roles in Brassed Off at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next month.

Cast members appeared with the Jackfield Elcock Reisen Brass Band, whose members played for guests at the attraction.

The National Brass Band Championship competitors, based in Shropshire, will be joining the actors on stage when the show runs at the Grand from April 8 to 12.

Conductor Chris Smith, a euphonium player, said: "It's great for the band to be involved with the play. It's been a wonderful experience for all of us."

The play, which follows the fortunes of a Yorkshire colliery brass band, has been revived this year in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the 1984 miners' strike.

To book tickets visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call (01902) 429212.



Brassed Off actors Luke Adamson and Andrew Dunn with band members at the museum

IT'S A Beautiful Day for Michael Bubl  fans when the Canadian crooner arrives in the West Midlands next week for concerts at the National Indoor Arena on Wednesday and Thursday.

The 38-year-old singer, who has brought style and classy showmanship to the music scene in recent years, had major success last year with his latest album To Be Loved which yielded the hit singles It's A Beautiful Day, Close Your Eyes and After All.

The ice hockey loving showman was delighted during the recent Winter Olympics at Sochi when a medley of his tunes was used by US figure skaters Alex and Maria Shibutani for their routine.

His hit-packed set is likely to include Just Haven't Met You Yet and his sparkling versions of Cry Me A River, Feeling Good, To Love Somebody and Try A Little Tenderness.

Other gigs of the week include a St Patrick's Day warm up with The Dublin Legends - former members of The Dubliners - Sean Cannon, Eamonn Campbell, Patsy Watchorn and Gerry O'Connor at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow night.

Bombay Bicycle Club bring their indie rock sound to Brum's O2 Academy on Saturday, the same venue on Sunday night will be sold



Michael Bubl  - NIA dates out for US pop-punk band All Time Low.

In the O2 Academy's second venue on Sunday The English Beat featuring Birmingham's own Dave Wakeling will revive 80s memories with Mirror In The Bathroom. And 2-Tone fans will be back on Thursday to see The Selecter.

Meanwhile, Chvrches are at Digbeth's Institute on Monday and 60s survivor Rodriguez, the maker of cult hit Sugar Man, plays the Symphony Hall on Tuesday.

Chelsea Joker and Sinnerman

COMEDIAN Joel Dommett performs in Wolverhampton as part of his debut stand-up tour tomorrow night (Friday).

The star of BBC's Impractical Jokers and the host of Made In Chelsea spin-off Live In Chelsea, Dommett takes the Slade Rooms stage in Broad Street from 8pm for his 'Practical Joker' show.

Dommett gained rave reviews for his debut Edinburgh Festival show Neon Hero in 2011 and follow-up Nunchuck Silver Medalist. Tickets are £11. Call 0870 320 7000.

Taking to the stage at the Slade Rooms tonight (Thursday) is ITV quiz chaser Paul Sinha. 'The Sinnerman', a qualified doctor, is also an accomplished stand-up comic. Tickets £13.20. Doors 7pm.

Fallen women theme to operas

FALLEN women are the theme for Welsh National Opera's spring season at Birmingham Hippodrome.

WNO stage Boulevard Solitude tonight, Hans Werner Henze's 1950s setting of the Manon Lescaut story. The more famous Manon Lescaut by Puccini, a UK debut for Polish director Mariusz Trelinski, is tomorrow. Verdi's tear-jerker La traviata ends the season on Saturday.

The theme continues in Errollyn Wallen's Anon, a WNO production with Sampad South Asian Arts, at Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, on March 25 and at The Mac in Edgbaston on March 26.

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What's On!

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SATURDAY'S TV 8.03.14

CHOICE



The Jonathan Ross Show

ITV, 9.20pm
Jennifer Hudson has had an extraordinary decade. From being a runner-up on American Idol in 2004, to her Grammy-winning eponymous debut album, and her Oscar, Bafta, and Golden Globe-winning performance in Dreamgirls, she epitomises the American Dream. In the last of the current series, Jennifer drops into the studio to promote her UK concert for the Free the Children charity. Tycoon Richard Branson will also be discussing a life in business and daredevil adventures; Sue Perkins chats about the success of The Great British Bake Off.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Cooks. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News: Regional News. **Weather: 1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v Italy (Kick-off 2.30pm). John Inverdale introduces coverage of the opening match in the fourth round of the Six Nations championship. **4.25** BBC News: Regional News. **Weather: 4.40** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v France (Kick-off 5.00pm). Gabby Logan introduces coverage of the second match of the fourth weekend of the championship, staged at Murrayfield.

7.00 The Voice UK. Emma Willis and Marvin Humes host the final battle show, by the end of which Kylie Minogue, Tom Jones, Ricky Wilson and Will.i.am will be one step closer to choosing their acts.

9.10 The National Lottery Live.

9.20 Casualty. Iain traits to assist a distressed ex-Army friend, whose paranoia over his wife is at breaking point, while new nurse Lofy's keen eye helps save a young man.

10.10 BBC News: Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, which included Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur and West Bromwich Albion v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.

11.45 The Football League Show. Highlights and all the goals from today's fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Birmingham City v Queens Park Rangers.

1.05 Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) **7.00** Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) **7.30** Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) **8.00** Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) **8.30** Sport Relief's Top Dog. (R) **9.00** Live Athletics: 11.30 Escape to the Country. (R) **12.15** Talking Pictures. **1.00** Film: The Trouble with Harry. (1955) **2.35** Film: The Man Who Knew Too Much. (1956) **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Live Athletics.

8.15 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring is determined that all his men should be well-shod and have battle-worthy feet, so he starts a regimen involving lengthy route marches. (R)

8.45 The Perfect Morecambe & Wise. Another selection of classic sketches and routines from the comedy duo's shows.

9.15 37 Days. The continental powers are pushed to the brink of war, and Sir Edward Grey seems unsure as to whether Britain should keep out of the impending conflict. Last in the series.

10.15 Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle. Another ramble through the mind of the comedian.

10.45 01 XL. Comedians Cal Wilson, Jack Whitehall and Jimmy Carr join Stephen Fry and regular panellist Alan Davies for an extended edition of the obscure general knowledge quiz.

11.30 Film: Milk. (2008) Biopic of politician and activist Harvey Milk, who became America's first openly gay elected official in the 1970s. Directed by Gus Van Sant and starring Sean Penn.

1.30 Film: Nemesis. (1992) **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. **6.10** Dino Dan. (R) **6.25** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **6.45** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.20** Spooky. (R) **7.30** Scrambled. **8.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News: Weather. **11.30** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **12.00** Live FA Cup Football. **3.00** The Illusionists. (R) **4.05** The Chase. (R) **5.05** Off Their Rockers. (R) **5.35** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.45** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Strikes Back! Comedy compilation of Harry Hill's most off-the-wall observations inspired by viewers' home videos, featuring potshots at popular culture.

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. The Georgie duo play an undercover prank on David Dickinson, go head to head in another round of Ant v Dec and join dance troupe the Mazeppa Cossacks in the End of the Show Show.

8.20 The Cube. A teacher and a pizza delivery man tackle a series of tough challenges, from agility tests to skills trials, aiming to win a jackpot of £250,000. Phillip Schofield hosts.

9.20 The Jonathan Ross Show. With Jennifer Hudson, Richard Branson, Sue Perkins and Elbow.

10.20 ITV News: Weather.

10.35 FA Cup Highlights. Action from the sixth round.

11.25 All You Can Eat. Superized meals, restaurant challenges and eating contests. (R)

12.20 Jackpot247.

CHANNEL 4

9.00 Live Paralympic Winter Games. Further coverage of the opening day of events in Russia. **11.30** The Morning Line. **12.30** Deal or No Deal. **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Sandown Park and Wolverhampton. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.10 Channel 4 News.

6.30 Paralympic Winter Games Highlights. Jonathan Edwards and Ade Adepitan present a look back at the opening day of events in Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, which included alpine skiing and wheelchair curling.

7.00 Crutts 2014. Clare Balding presents highlights from day three of the annual dog show held at the NEC in Birmingham, featuring coverage of the utility and toy group judging events.

9.00 Hostages. Duncan is ordered to tie up loose ends as investigators get nearer to uncovering the conspiracy, and the FBI agent takes the next step in his master plan by giving Ellen the poison.

10.00 Film: X-Men: The Last Stand. (2006) The mutant heroes battle old ally Jean Grey, returned from the dead as the destructive and seemingly unstoppable Phoenix. Superman sequel, starring Hugh Jackman and Ian McKellen.

12.00 Film: Cloverfield. (2008) Found-footage monster thriller, starring Michael Stahl-David. **1.35** Blackout. (R) **2.55** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. (R) **5.05** Trans World Sport.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Film: Zathura: A Space Adventure. (2005) Family sci-fi adventure, starring Josh Hutcherson and Jonah Bobo. **12.00** Film: The Fifth Element. (1997) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bruce Willis. **2.25** Film: Wimbledon. (2004) Romantic drama, starring Kirsten Dunst and Paul Bettany. **4.10** Film: Columbo: The Greenhouse Jungle. (1972) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **5.45** Film: Columbo: Double Shock. (1973) Detective drama, with Peter Falk and Martin Landau.

7.00 NCIS. An explosion at a mausoleum exposes a number of freshly dismembered bodies, prompting the team to begin a multiple murder investigation. Abby has a personal problem to deal with. (R)

8.00 NCIS. A supposedly dead marine suddenly regains consciousness on the autopsy table, leaving the team struggling to solve the mystery of how he came to be in such a strange predicament. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 UFC Fight Night London: Live. Alexander Gustafsson v Jimi Manuwa. Coverage of the light heavyweight contest at the 02 in London, where rising British star Manuwa will be looking to record a surprise victory.

12.05 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Benidorm ER. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes: Revenge of the Fifth **7.25** Doctor Who **8.15** Top Gear **9.15** Film: Blades of Glory. Comedy, starring Will Ferrell, Jon Heder, Will Arnett and Amy Poehler. (2007) **10.45** Family Guy

BBC Four
7.00 Great Barrier Reef **8.00** Lost Kingdoms of South America **9.00** Salamander **10.15** Totally British **70s Rock 'n' Roll** **11.35** The Ballad of Mott the Hoople

ITV2
2.45 Film: Curly Sue (1991) **4.50** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **7.00** Film: The Incredible Hulk. Comic-book adventure, starring Edward Norton. (2008) **9.15** Film: The Sweetest Thing (2002) **11.10** Film: Pitch Black (2000)

ITV3
2.50 Film: Columbo: Troubled Waters (1975) **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** A Touch of Frost

ITV4
11.45 Live Darts. The UK Open. **5.00** Eric Burdon: Sports Life Stories **6.00** I Want That Car **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00** Film: Beverly Hills Cop II (1987)

E4
3.30 The Big Bang Theory: It All Started with a Big Bang **4.00** How I Met Your Mother **5.00** Rude(ish) Tube **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** How I Met Your Mother **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00** Film: Beverly Hills Cop II (1987)

Film4
3.05 August Rush (2007) **5.15** The Death and Life of Charlie St Cloud (2010) **7.05** St Trinian's (2007) **9.00** Knight and Day (2010) **11.10** Vanilla Sky (2001)

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 9.03.14

CHOICE



Jeremy Clarkson

Top Gear: Burma Special BBC2, 8pm

The first of a two-part programme in which Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May are challenged to build a bridge over the River Kwai in Thailand. In order to do that, however, they have to drive across Burma, a country that has been largely closed to Westerners for more than 40 years, and must make the trip in three lorries, each bought sight unseen from the internet on a limited budget. What follows is an epic journey of beautiful scenery, regular adversity, ongoing malfunction and the constant bickering of the three men.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** Wanted Under Under. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **5.00** Deadly on a Mission: Pole to Pole. **5.30** Songs of Praise.

6.05 BBC News

6.30 Blandings. Clarence grows a raggedy beard, much to the dismay of Freddie, who worries he has little chance of impressing Hollywood starlet Pauline Pettie if his father looks like an old tramp.

7.00 Countryfile. Reports on the latest rural developments. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. A new friendship grows for Jenny when she is introduced to a patient's male cousin, while Chummy discovers her mother has discharged herself from hospital. Last in the series.

9.00 The Musketeers. A young girl is killed after being hit by the royal carriage, and the Musketeers' investigations lead them to an extraordinary woman condemned to death for witchcraft.

10.00 BBC News

10.25 Film: **Bruce Almighty**. (2003) God tires of a reporter's constant complaining, so passes on His powers to give him a taste of real responsibility. Comedy, with Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman and Jennifer Aniston.

12.00 Film: **Forget Me Not**. (2010) **1.30** Weather. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.15** Film: Son of Kong. (1933) **7.15** Monty Don's Italian Gardens. (R) **8.15** Countryfile. (R) **9.15** Gardeners' World. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.00** Michel Roux's Service. (R) **1.00** Michel Roux's Service. (R) **2.00** Live Athletics.

6.00 ITV

6.00 ITV Trade Secrets. Advice on making money from antiques and collectibles. (R) **6.30** Mystery of the Moor. Investigating Bronze Age burial items discovered on Dartmoor.

7.00 Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom. A team of filmmakers from the BBC's Natural History Unit and America's Smithsonian Institution venture into Burma's jungles to catalogue its species. (R)

8.00 Top Gear: Burma Special. Part one of two. Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May travel through the wilds of Burma as they take three lorries on one of their toughest challenges to date.

9.00 Fast and Fearless: Britain's Banger Racers. Part one of two. Documentary following drivers at the Arena Essex Raceway.

10.00 Mock the Week Looks Back at Travel. Another themed selection from the show's archives. (R)

10.35 Line of Duty. (R)

11.35 Film: **The Killing Fields**. (1984) Fact-based drama, starring Sam Waterston.

1.50 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.45** Holby City. (R) **3.45** Silk. (R) **4.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. **6.10** Dino Dan. (R) **6.25** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **6.45** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.20** Spooky. (R) **7.30** Scrambled. **8.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **11.25** ITV News: Weather. **11.30** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **12.30** River Monsters. (R) **1.30** Live FA Cup Football. **4.20** Film: Live and Let Die. (1973)

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News: Weather. **7.00** Dancing on Ice. Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley present the last-ever final, and a show full of surprises is promised as the three remaining celebrities battle it out. Last in the series.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Harry deals with a raft of problems on his return from Berlin – not least the news of Henri's arrest – while Delphine provides the beleaguered staff with a much-needed morale boost.

10.00 ITV News at Ten: Weather.

10.15 Birds of a Feather. Tracey and Sharon worry about their future. Last in the series. (R)

10.45 FA Cup Highlights. Action from today's matches in the sixth round, which were Manchester City v Wigan Athletic, Hull City v Sunderland and Sheffield United v Charlton Athletic.

11.45 Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union. Northampton Saints v Saracens and Bath v Exeter Chiefs.

12.40 The Store. **2.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **4.10** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Live Paralympic Winter Games. Coverage of the second day of events in Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. **11.00** Live Paralympic Winter Games. Further coverage of the second day of events in Russia. **2.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **3.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **3.30** How I Met Your Mother. **4.00** The Simpsons. (R) **4.30** The Simpsons. (R) **5.00** Deal or No Deal.

6.00 Channel 4 News

6.30 Paralympic Winter Games Highlights. Jonathan Edwards and Ade Adepitan present a look back at the second day of events in Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, which included alpine skiing and wheelchair curling.

7.00 Crufts 2014: Best in Show. Claire Balding presents highlights from the fourth and final day of Crufts, and the results of the 2014 dog hero, friends for life and best in show are announced. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: **One Day**. (2011) Premiere. The 20-year friendship between two university graduates is explored through the anniversaries of their first meeting. Romantic drama, with Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess.

11.05 Film: **Working Girl**. (1988) Comedy, starring Melanie Griffith.

1.15 The Good Wife. (R) **2.00** One Born Every Minute. (R) **2.55** Supernanny US. (R) **3.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.30** River Cottage Bites. (R) **4.50** Freeports on 4. **5.15** Arenacross. **5.45** Live Paralympic Winter Games. Coverage of the third day of events in Sochi.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fill and the Flowerpots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.00** Milkshake! Show Songs. (R) **7.05** Rookbar and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Milkshake! Monster. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.35** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Power Rangers Megaforce. (R) **11.00** Access. (R) **11.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.05** Ice Road Truckers. (R) **1.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R) **2.00** Film: Forever Young. (1992) **5.05** 5 News Weekend. **5.10** Film: Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son. (2011)

7.10 Film: **Hancock**. (2008) Superhero comedy, starring Will Smith.

9.00 Film: **Blade: Trinity**. (2004) The vampire hunter and a team of ruthless human sidekicks face a showdown with Dracula himself. Action thriller sequel, starring Wesley Snipes, Jessica Biel and Ryan Reynolds.

11.00 Film: **Beowulf**. (2007) Motion-capture animated fantasy, starring Ray Winstone.

1.10 SuperCasino. **3.05** The Lost Orphan: A Home for Mirela. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 The Voice UK **9.15** Hair **10.15** Family Guy **10.55** Bluestone 42 **11.25** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 The Golden Age of Steam Railways **8.00** Shooting the Hollywood Stars **9.00** Good Swan, Bad Swan: Dancing Swan Lake **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** Film: We Have a Pope (2011)

ITV2
2.10 Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **4.25** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **5.40** Film: Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (2004) **7.30** Film: Batman & Robin. Comic-book adventure, starring George Clooney. (1997) **10.00** The Only Way is Essex **10.50** Party Wright Around the World **11.50** The Big Reunion 2014

ITV3
2.45 Film: Columbo: Forgotten Lady (1975) **4.45** Lewis **6.55** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** It'll Be Alright on the Night **10.00** Inspector Morse

ITV4
12.45 Live Darts. The UK Open. **5.00** Police, Camera, Action! **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Live Darts. The UK Open. **11.00** The Power of Darts **E4**

3.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **4.00** The Tomorrow People **5.00** Troy **6.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Employee of the Month (2006) **10.10** The Big Bang Theory **10.40** How I Met Your Mother **Film4**

3.00 Silent Running (1972) **4.50** Clueless (1995) **6.45** Dear John (2010) **8.50** Never Let Me Go Special **9.00** Good Morning, Vietnam (1987) **11.20** The Hills Have Eyes 2 (2007)

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Film Choices

Monday

Lock Up, Channel 5, 11pm

A convict is transferred to a maximum security prison, where he falls foul of a sadistic warden with a grudge against him – and who abuses his position of power to make the inmate's life a misery and destroy his good relationship with the guards. Thriller, starring Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, Darlanne Fluegel and Torn Sizemore. (1989)

Tuesday

McBride: Murder Past Midnight, Channel 5, 3.15pm

The crusading lawyer is called up for jury duty in the case of a woman thought to have poisoned her wealthy husband. However, he ends up reluctantly agreeing to defend the accused when she is retried. Mystery, starring John Larroquette, Marta DuBois and Matt Lutz. (2005)

Wednesday

The Sea Inside, Channel 4, 12.50am

Fact-based drama about a fisherman who is paralysed from the neck down in a diving accident. After spending years dependent on others to take care of him, he decides to fight for the legal right to end his own life. Starring Javier Bardem, Belen Rueda, Lola Duenas, Mabel Rivera, Celso Bugallo, Clara Segura and Joan Malmau. In Spanish, Catalan and Galician. (2004)

**My Week with Marilyn, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm**

Thursday

My Week with Marilyn, BBC2, 9pm

A film student gets a job as a production assistant on the set of movie *The Prince and the Showgirl*. He bears witness to the clash of conflicting personalities between leads Marilyn Monroe and Laurence Olivier, and becomes a confidant of the troubled, lonely Hollywood actress. Fact-based drama, starring Michelle Williams, Eddie Redmayne and Kenneth Branagh. (2011)

Friday

The Last Station, BBC2, 11.05pm

A naive young man is appointed as the private secretary to the ageing Leo Tolstoy in 1910, but finds himself in the middle of a bitter conflict. The writer has embraced strong socialist and pacifist principles and wishes to leave everything to the people – but his wife does not want to give up his legacy. Period drama, with James McAvoy, Christopher Plummer and Helen Mirren. (2009)

Drillbit Taylor, Channel 4, 12.55am

Three kids fall foul of the local bully on their first day at high school, so they advertise for a bodyguard. They end up hiring a man who turns out to be a low-rent mercenary, but discover their new-found protector is not quite the hardened soldier of fortune he claims to be. Comedy, starring Owen Wilson. (2008)

Pick of the Week

The nurses who deliver more than just babies

The midwives will have to deliver some bad news this week – it's the last in the current series. And that will leave over eight million fans wondering exactly what to do with their Sunday evenings.

But just why has this tale of East End London in the days before the contraceptive pill been such a hit, while other, more hyped dramas, struggle to get half as many viewers?

Helen George, who plays the convent's resident blonde bombshell Trixie, has a couple of theories.

"I think it's partly because of the original memoirs that were written by Jennifer Worth. She'd created such beautiful stories and her memoirs were so wonderful, and then Heidi Thomas continued that when she adapted it for the screen, so I think it begins with the writing and the stories. If you've got a good story to tell, people want to listen.

"And then from that, the cast has been really great – it's wonderful that people like Pam Ferris and Miranda Hart wanted to do it.

"And I think it's a period of history that hasn't really been focused on in

primetime TV, so there's an interest in that."

There's also an interest in the clothes, which Helen admits she's shares. "We've had an amazing costume designer, and I'm told vintage fashions suit me – it's a period that really accentuates a woman's curves.

"They hold you in all the right places, so it's quite flattering, although it's tough to eat on set sometimes – I'm sewn into my dresses and trousers because they are so tight. I'm thinking 'I can't even sit down properly, so eating pasta probably wasn't a good idea..."

But while the mix of babies, Fifties frocks and cycling nuns may sound a bit twee, regular viewers will know that the show can also be hard-hitting – and some of those medical scenes aren't for the faint of heart.

Luckily, filming them isn't too much of an ordeal. Helen laughs: "It doesn't bother me, although I'm sure if in real life I was ever faced with one of these situations I'd be passing out on the floor. "Whilst it looks very realistic on the screen, we have this thing where

the midwife on set holds a condom over the actress who's pretending to give birth, and she pops it when their waters break. You can't really feel squeamish because it's just a condom full of water!"

So, bear that in mind during any particularly graphic scenes in this episode as Jenny pays a visit to first-time mother Jeannette.

The two women quickly establish a rapport, which is just as well, as Jeannette needs frequent visits – and if that allows Jenny to see more of the mum-to-be's cousin Philip, that's just a perk of the job.

Do we sense another stylish Fifties wedding in the offing, or are we getting a bit ahead of ourselves?

Elsewhere, it looks like Chummy's nursing skills may be needed closer to home, as she discovers Lady Browne has discharged herself from hospital, leaving her daughter in despair.

The mums of Poplar have learned to heed Chummy's advice, so why won't her own mother listen to her?

Jessica Raine, Jenny Agutter and Judy Parfitt also star.

**Miranda Hart stars in Call the Midwife, Sunday, BBC1, 8pm**

Best of the Rest

Monday

DCI Banks**ITV, 9pm**

In the conclusion of a two-parter, and the current series, Alan's colleagues are tracking Tracy's phone records in the hope of getting a lead. While searching for his abducted daughter, Banks pressures Al to lead him to Jaffar, aka 'Jaff', but his request proves fruitless. Eventually Al does offer to help – at a price – and the detective considers breaking all the rules to meet his demands. Meanwhile, Morton is suspended following the result of Cabbot's internal investigation. With her job hanging by a thread, Tracy's life in danger and Banks 'in a bad place' as his relationship with Annie is close to snapping, the DCI is going to have to move heaven and earth to keep his family and colleagues together.

The Michael McIntyre Chat Show**BBC1, 10.35pm**

Award-winning Michael McIntyre gives Graham Norton and Alan Carr a run for their money this week as he joins the ranks of comedian/chat show host. Hopefully he'll be able to get some top tips from veteran broadcaster Terry Wogan. Pop star Lily Allen faced the benign wrath of Miriam Margolyes the other week on Graham's Friday night show, so hopefully she'll be a little more animated here while plugging her new single *Air Balloon*. And Alan Sugar is always good fun on Norton's show, so let's hope McIntyre gets the best from him as well, or perhaps he'll be the one hearing those two fearful words which round off most editions of *The Apprentice*.

Tuesday

Shetland**BBC1, 9pm**

Following its successful debut series last year, Shetland is back for a new run of three two-part stories. Yes, we know TV isn't exactly short of crime dramas, but this one promises to be a cut above the rest, and this time around, the adaptations of best-selling author Ann Cleeves' books will be a little darker and more atmospheric. Douglas Henshall is back as DI Jimmy Perez, and the opening instalment guest stars Scottish stalwart Brian Cox.

Wednesday

Law & Order: UK**ITV, 9pm**

Once we get over that Shard-centric intro – the most ubiquitous building in any London-based drama these days – the new run of Dick Wolf's Blighy-based saga grabs the viewer with a car chase involving an Astra pinched from Kentish Town. However, thanks to a shock development, the car being pursued comes to a sudden stop, as does the twentysomething driver's life. A discovery in his boot proves even more shocking: a man in his sixties who may have already been dead when he was put there. New arrival DS Joe Hawkins (Ben Bailey Smith) tries to discover who the deceased was and how he died. Tricky as the deceased has no hands or teeth.

Astronauts: Living in Space**Channel 4, 9pm**

This new three-part documentary explores what it is like to live and work outside the Earth's atmosphere for months at a time. The stars of the show are astronauts Rick Mastracchio, Koichi Wakata and Mike Hopkins. They'll be revealing the effects of microgravity on their bodies, and demonstrate how everyday tasks such as eating, sleeping and washing are completed while weightless. We also get a rare insight into the International Space Station; how NASA supports the crews and families during their missions, leaving her daughter in despair.

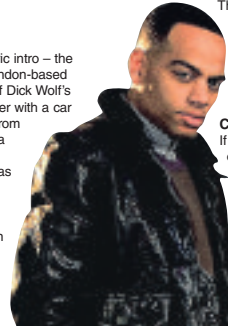
The next part can be seen on Thursday (March 13).

Thursday

Holiday Hit Squad**It Takes a Thief to Catch a Thief****Channel 5, 8pm**

If you missed the first instalment of this new series last week, it follows reformed master thief Richard Taylor and policeman Will Davies as they show retailers how to deal with the shoplifters who are pinching their profits. This week, the duo are in Romford to visit a designer clothing store, and find that while managers

Amber and Lou may be feisty,

**Law & Order: UK, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm**

they are no match for organised gangs of thieves – especially as there's no CCTV to help them. Can a new consignment of security gadgets, and a masterclass from Richard in the tricks of the shoplifting trade cut down on the pilfering?

Friday

Murder's Agents of SHIELD**Channel 4, 8pm**

It took years to get established as a lucrative movie and TV franchise, but now the Marvel universe is expanding like a loaf with too much yeast. As any fan will tell you, Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg) was apparently killed before the battle of New York during Avengers Assemble, but following his resurrection in this show last year, fans are desperate to see how he came back from the dead. Hopefully we'll find out a few answers this week as Coulson is grilled by the Centipede organisation.

Jonathan Creek**BBC1, 9pm**

Despite his wife's phone call promising a low-key 40th birthday party, the lucky Home Office junior Minister at the heart of this final mystery has a real surprise in store: a marquee, loads of gathered friends, and state-of-the-art music to entertain the masses. Except the team from mobile music providers 'Sound Trax' never quite make it to the event, and for the problem-solving genius organising the event she has no idea she's about to be kidnapped. Jonathan deduces that she may manage to send some coded SOS to the outside world. Could the phrase 'Waste not...' be the clue to cracking the case?

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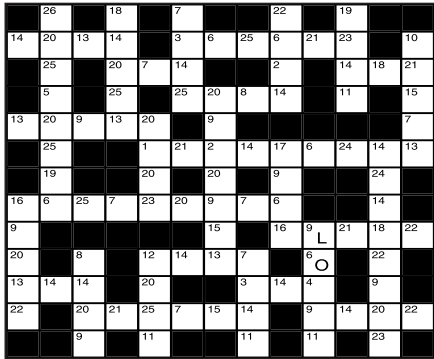
Puzzler

Brain Gym

No.263

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	U	E	J	Y	T	L	G	Q	I	F	S	C
D	X	B	P	V	M	R	W	H	A	Z	O	N

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

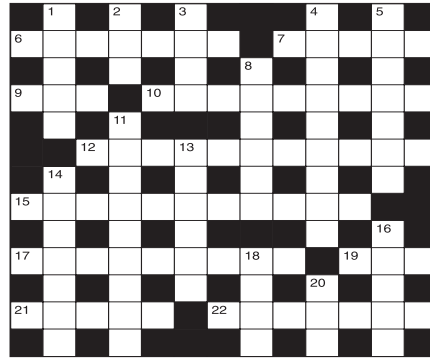
Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. He doesn't give much away (7)
 7. Let in or out (5)
 9. It became yours (3)
 10. Possibly ample here, but it doesn't last long (9)
 12. Are those on it making an empty protest? (6,5)
 15. Flighty artist's model (7,4)
 17. Such speed could be fatal (9)
 19. Margaret shortly turned to stone (3)
 21. Polar story heard too often? (5)
 22. A record? Yes, of course (3,4)

Down

1. Seeing sense (5)
 2. Get on in stages (3)
 3. Decline and fall (4)
 4. Unemployed crew with mischievous potentialities (4,5)
 5. Cafe and an inn combine somehow to make money (7)
 8. Moving spirit (6)
 11. It circulates records (9)
 13. Vegetables on the course (6)
 14. Render an account (7)
 16. Opted to change a storehouse (5)
 18. Meat axe (4)
 20. A current recession (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

6. Incapacitate (7)
 7. Postpone (5)
 9. Non-professional (3)
 10. Unremitting (9)
 12. Stamp collector (11)
 15. Dispute (11)
 17. Sycophant (9)
 19. Artful (3)
 21. Pretence (5)
 22. Free (7)

Down

1. Essential (5)
 2. Prohibit (3)
 3. Scheme (4)
 4. Stupid (9)
 5. Sorrow (7)
 8. Determine (6)
 11. Stimulant (9)
 13. Slacken (6)
 14. Big rock (7)
 16. Embrace (5)
 18. Regular (4)
 20. Wager (3)

Sudoku

2			8			4	5
3		4		9			
			3		7		8
			6	7			2
	4	1				8	
	2		8		4	5	6
	6		1		8		
		3				2	8
7	5			2			1
							3

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	3	7	1	1	8	9	2	4
9	4	1	7	6	2	3	5	8
5	2	8	4	9	3	7	1	6
8	5	4	1	3	6	2	9	7
1	6	3	2	7	9	8	4	5
7	9	2	8	5	4	6	3	1
2	7	5	9	8	1	4	6	3
4	8	6	3	2	5	1	7	9
3	1	9	6	4	7	5	8	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Hunting season; 8 Continue; 9 Deed; 10 Weasel; 12 Ordeal; 14 Anklet; 16 Damsel; 18 Aria; 20 Generate; 22 High and mighty. Down: 1 European; 2 Stakes; 3 Anon; 4 Asteroid; 5 Raided; 6 Bole; 11 Litigant; 13 Apostate; 15 Loathe; 17 Mirage; 19 Rall; 21 Name. QUICK - Across: 7 Indispensable; 8 Dispense; 9 Room; 10 Caress; 12 Talent; 14 Recess; 16 Remote; 18 Chic; 20 Effusive; 22 Dispassionate. Down: 1 Indicate; 2 Simple; 3 Open; 4 Ancestor; 5 Barrel; 6 Aliso; 11 Suspense; 13 Nativity; 15 Escape; 17 Musing; 19 Hall; 21 Fair.



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Dine and Dance from £149.⁹⁵

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Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and a disco (conditions apply). Or the Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

Theatre Showstopper from £199.⁹⁵

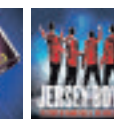
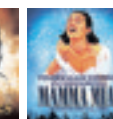
This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options).

Pick ups points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.
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Executive detached on corner plot with pool



A four-bedroomed executive detached property in Lawnswood Drive, Walsall comes with a pool table room and a swimming pool.

It is for sale through Dixons Estate Agents at £375,000.

It has an entrance hall, lounge, guest WC, study, kitchen/diner, utility, pool table room, four double bedrooms (master en suite), a separate shower room and a family bathroom. The garage also has a shower room for use of the pool along with a sauna. The lounge has wooden flooring, a gas fire and French doors. The pool table room has sliding doors, laminate flooring and wooden wall panelling. The kitchen/dining room has ceramic flooring, an oven, gas hob and extractor canopy. The detached garage/pool house has access to the sauna and shower room and the garden houses the swimming pool.

Call Dixons Estate Agents on 01922 432011 or visit www.dixonsestateagents.co.uk



Improved residence that's well-appointed

A SPLENDIDLY appointed and decorated semi-detached property in Birmingham Road, Walsall, needs to be viewed in order to appreciate its many appealing features. Having undergone considerable modernisation, it is for sale through Edwards Moore Estate Agents at £297,500.

It has gas central heating, a reception hall, guest WC, basement, through lounge/dining room with wooden flooring, a chimney recess and double doors out to the garden. The property has an excellent sized contemporary family/dining kitchen with a stainless steel extractor hood and a dining area with ceiling spotlights and a window seat and a door out to the rear. Call Edwards Moore Estate Agents on 01922 621411 or visit www.edwardsmoore.co.uk



K. Stuart Swash

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12, CHAPEL COURT, CHAPEL STREET, PENSNETT

Immaculately presented Flat
(access via Main Entrance rear of St. James' Church Hall)

Guide: £58,000 / £63,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 10.00 a.m.

16 BATE STREET, LANESFIELD, WOLVERHAMPTON

Spacious and smart three bed Bungalow - fully modernised

Guide: £118,000 / £123,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 11.00 a.m.

209 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, WOLVERHAMPTON

Well located three bed Terraced

Guide: 63,000 / £68,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 10.00 a.m.

80 BIRCHES ROAD, BRADMORE

Needing some upgrade - large three bed Semi in good location

Guide: £80,000 / £85,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 10.45 a.m.

19 PROSSER STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON

On corner plot - large End Terraced with big outbuilding

Guide: £58,000 / £63,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 11.45 a.m.

75 HILL STREET, ESSINGTON

Investment Property - Post Office / Shop with three bed Flat over

Shop Let. Flat Vacant

Guide: £65,000 / 70,000

VIEWING: FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7th & 8th MARCH @ 12.15 p.m.

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A Chronicle supplement

CHRONICLE**Property**

Warm to ways for cut in energy and home bills

WITH energy bills at record levels, the Heating Helpline has some energy saving advice on ways to improve insulation and lower bills.

Around 60 per cent of the energy used in the home is for heating – for most households that's many hundreds of pounds spent per year just to keep it warm.

B&ES, the Building & Energy Services Association, who operate the free consumer advice service the Heating Helpline, say too few households take sufficient measures to fully insulate their homes. This means a lot of energy – and money – is simply wasted. Yet there are simple steps to take, some costing very little, that can help keep the warmth in, so there is much less need to crank up the thermostat.

Here are the Heating Helpline's top 10 list of tips

1. If you have less than 10cm of insulation in your loft you'll be wasting energy. Top the insulation up to 27cm and you could save over £150 a year.
2. Since the 1930s, most houses have been built with an air cavity between two outer walls. Get this gap filled with insulating foam and you could save up to £200 a year on bills.
3. Floorboards lose a lot of heat. Insulation seal between the gaps can save you about £25 per year.
4. Insulate your hot water cylinder. Fitting a British Standard jacket around your cylinder will cut heat loss by over 75 per cent and save you around £40 a year – more than the cost of the jacket.
5. Lagging all your hot water pipes could also save you more than £25 a year.
6. Badly-fitted doors and windows mean avoidable heat loss. Draught

**Top up your loft insulation and you could save more than £150 a year**

proofing doors and windows by sealing gaps will help save energy. A curtain at the front door and heavy, well-fitted curtains provide insulation and reduce draughts. To track down the source of draughts take a lit candle and see where it flickers.

7. Keep your doors and windows closed when the heating is on and save £15 a year.

8. Thermal blinds, which stay flush to the window frame using magnets, are a good alternative to heavy-lined curtains. Cost is about £145 per sq m.

9. Draw your curtains at dusk to help keep the heat generated inside your rooms.

10. Unused fireplaces are one of the biggest causes of lost heat. If you're not using your chimney but don't

want to board it up try a chimney balloon – they're easy to inflate and last for years.

Under the Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO) programme participating energy companies will help pay for all or part of the cost of installing different home insulation measures and even a new boiler. To find out more contact the independent Energy Saving Advice Service on: 0300 123 1234.

The Heating Helpline provides essential information on energy saving in the home and the importance of regular heating maintenance, and also offers dozens of money-saving solutions for homeowners. Contact them free on 0800 810 8303 or visit the website at: <http://www.heatinghelpline.org.uk>

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- Rear Gardens

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<p>NEW</p>  <p>SNEYD LANE ESSINGTON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive Extended Semi Detached Premier Road and Location Four Bedrooms Extended Lounge • Conservatory Dining Room • Breakfast Kitchen Utility & WC Gas Central Heating Double Glazing Large Block Paved Driveway Delightful Landscaped Rear Gardens <p>£250,000</p>	<p>NO CHAIN</p>  <p>SANDALWOOD CLOSE COPPICE FARM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended modern link detached Spacious lounge and dining room Refitted kitchen Four bedrooms Refitted bathroom Rear garden Double glazing Gas central heating Garage and driveway No chain • Energy Rating D <p>£175,000</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>LYNWOOD CLOSE OFF CRAB LANE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Style Link Detached No Chain Three Bedrooms Bathroom Large Lounge Kitchen Gas Central Heating Magnificent Double Glazing Car Port • Driveway Energy Rating TBC <p>£159,950</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>CEDAR PARK ROAD SNEYD PARK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended semi detached • Energy rating TBC Three bedrooms • Refitted bathroom Lounge and dining room • Extended Newly Fitted Kitchen Gas central heating • Double Glazing Off Road Parking • Garage/carport • Rear garden <p>£145,000</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>AMPLEFORTH DRIVE WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much improved semi detached Lounge and conservatory Fitted kitchen Three bedrooms Family bathroom En-suite shower room Ground floor wc Gas central heating and double glazing Garage and driveway Rear garden <p>£139,950</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>KEASDEN GRIVE WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Style Semi Detached Lounge • Dining Room Newly Fitted Kitchen Bathroom • Energy Rating TBC Double Glazing Gas Central Heating Garage • Long Driveway Rear Gardens No Chain <p>£138,000</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>NEVIS GROVE COPPICE FARM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Semi Detached No Chain Spacious Lounge Dining Kitchen Two Double Bedrooms Bathroom Double Glazing Driveway Rear Garden <p>£122,000</p>	
<p>NEW</p>  <p>HOUGH WAY ESSINGTON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impressive First Floor Apartment Premier Cul-De-Sac Location Lounge • Fitted Kitchen Two Bedrooms Bathroom Double Glazing Allocated Parking Space No Chain Available Energy rating TBC <p>£114,000</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>BILSTON LANE WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period Mid Terrace Property Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Three Bedrooms Ground Floor Bathroom Gas Central Heating System Double Glazing Garage & Gardens to Rear No Chain <p>£90,000</p>	<p>NEW</p>  <p>BIRMINGHAM STREET WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period Mid Terrace No Chain Two Reception Rooms Kitchen Two Bedrooms First Floor Bathroom Gas Central Heating Rear Gardens <p>£79,950</p>	<p>NO CHAIN</p>  <p>STROUD AVENUE WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superb Modern style semi detached Spacious lounge Impressive refitted kitchen Energy D Three excellent bedrooms Luxury refitted bathroom Double glazing Gas central heating system Garage and driveway Rear garden • No chain <p>£142,500</p>	<p>REDUCED</p>  <p>MYRTLE CLOSE WOODLANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much improved modern semi detached Very popular location Through lounge and dining room Fitted kitchen Three bedrooms • Bathroom Energy Rating D Driveway and garage Pleasant front and rear gardens Gas central heating Double glazing <p>OFFERS OVER £135,000</p>	<p>REDUCED</p>  <p>DEANSGATE WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impressive modern semi detached No chain Spacious lounge Conservatory Dining kitchen • Guest wc Energy Rating C Three bedrooms • Bathroom Double glazing Gas central heating Driveway • Garden <p>£130,000</p>	 <p>LODGE STREET WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End terraced property Energy Rating TBC Three bedrooms • Lounge Large fitted kitchen Ground floor bathroom Separate wc Double glazing Gas central heating Rear garden Useful outbuilding <p>£99,950</p>	<p>REDUCED</p>  <p>THE CRESCENT WILLENHALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period Mid Terrace Property No Upward Chain Lounge • Dining Room Fitted Kitchen Two Double Bedrooms Ground Floor Bathroom Gas Central Heating Double Glazing Rear Gardens ENERGY RATING D <p>£89,950</p>

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NEW £900 pcm

Bell Lane

- A 6 double bed extended semi
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- 2 upstairs bathrooms 1 with a shower
- Conservatory and guest WC
- Driveway, garage, EPC rating D

NEW £575 pcm

Old Masters Close

- A modern 3 bed semi detached property
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen/diner with cooker
- Stylish upstairs family bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Parking, Garage EPC rating D

NEW £450 pcm

Springhill Court

- A splendid 2 bed 1st floor apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with some appliances
- Stylish bathroom with shower cubicle
- Double glazing throughout
- Parking space available

NEW £400 pcm

White Street

- A re-decorated 2 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Fitted kitchen with cooker
- Recently installed downstairs bathroom
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating E

NEW £375 pcm

Stafford Street

- A re-furnished 1 bed 2nd floor apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with some appliances
- New bathroom with shower
- Double Glazing throughout
- DSS accepted EPC rating E

NEW £300 pcm

The Shambles

- A well presented 1st floor studio apartment
- Open planned living and kitchen area
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with shower cubicle
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating C

£795 pcm

Follyhouse Lane

- An extended 4 bed semi detached property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- 2 family bathrooms both with showers
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Driveway and rear garden EPC rating D

£650 pcm

Stanley Road

- An extended 3 bed semi detached property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom with shower
- 3rd reception/4th bedroom
- Driveway, guest shower room EPC rating C

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£575 pcm

Follyhouse Lane

- A fully re-furnished 3 bed semi
- 1 spacious reception room
- New fitted kitchen/diner with cooker
- New upstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Rear garden and Driveway EPC rating E

£575 pcm

Slaney Road

- A modernised 4 bed mid terrace
- Through lounge and rear reception
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom
- Gas Central heating throughout
- DSS accepted EPC rating D

£550 pcm

Broadstone Avenue

- A fully re-furnished 2 bed apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Ground floor

£475 pcm

Dandys Walk

- A well presented 2 bed mid terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Pleasant family bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Driveway, DSS accepted EPC rating E

£475 pcm

Bloxwich Road

- A well presented 2 bed 1st floor apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen / diner
- Pleasant bathroom with separate WC
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Parking space DSS accepted EPC rating D

£475 pcm

Weston Street

- A re-decorated 3 bed mid terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating D

£450 pcm

Wolverhampton Road

- A re-furnished 2 bed end terrace
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- New fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating E

£450 pcm

Crown Lofts

- A modern 2 bed 1st floor apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Open planned lounge and kitchen
- Modern fitted kitchen with integral appliances
- Pleasant family bathroom with shower
- Double Glazing throughout
- Town Centre Location EPC rating B

£450 pcm

Dale Street

- A traditional 3 bed mid terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs family bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating D

£450 pcm

Stroud Avenue

- A choice of three 2 bed apartments
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with separate WC
- Double Glazing throughout
- Viewing essential EPC rating F

£450 pcm

Temple Square

- A traditional 3 bed semi detached
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Upstairs family bathroom and WC
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating E

£450 pcm

Darlaston Road

- A traditional 3 bed end terrace property
- 2 spacious reception rooms
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Downstairs bathroom with shower
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted

£395 pcm

Slaney Road

- A re-furnished 1 bed ground floor apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with shower cubicle
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Garage EPC rating C

£350 pcm

The Shambles

- A recently re-furnished 1 bed apartment
- 1 spacious reception room
- Modern fitted kitchen with cooker
- Pleasant bathroom with shower cubicle
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- DSS accepted EPC rating C

£325 pcm

Ablewell Street, Walsall

- A 1 bed 2nd floor apartment
- 1 spacious living room
- Modern fitted Kitchen
- Pleasant family bathroom
- Town Centre Location
- Gas Central Heating EPC rating D

£450 pcm

LET
Similar properties required

Smiths Flour Mill

- A modern 1 bed 1st floor apartment
- Open planned lounge and kitchen
- Fitted kitchen with integral appliances
- Stylish bathroom with shower
- Secure allocated parking
- viewing essential

£400 pcm

LET
Similar properties required

Eagleworks Drive

- A modern ground floor 1 bed apartment
- Open planned lounge and kitchen area
- Modern kitchen with appliances
- Pleasant family bathroom with shower
- Double Glazing throughout
- Allocated parking space

£395 pcm

LET
Similar properties required

Lichfield Rd

- Newly refurbished ground floor apartment
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- Modern fitted bathroom with shower
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- Downstairs W.C. • Family Bathroom
- Front and Rear Gardens • Sorry No DHSS

£525 PCM



Bloxwich NURSERY ROAD

- Three Bedroom Semi
- Lounge•Kitchen•Family Bathroom.
- Front Driveway • Double Glazing
- Gas Heating • DHSS Accepted

£525 PCM



Bloxwich ENVILLE CLOSE

- TWO BED semi-detached
- Lounge•Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom•Front and Rear Gardens
- Allocated Off Road Parking Space

£525 PCM



Bloxwich LANCASTER PLACE

- Two Bedroom Semi
- Lounge•Diner•Kitchen
- Bathroom•D.Glazed
- Gas Heating•Gardens•DHSS Accepted

£500 PCM



Bloxwich CHURCH STREET

- Two Bedroom Terrace
- Kitchen/Diner•Bathroom
- Shower Room•Shared Drive
- Garage•DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM



Walsall LORD STREET

- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Lounge•Dining Room
- Kitchen•Family Bathroom
- Gardens•DHSS ACCEPTED

£495 PCM



Willenhall LUCKNOW ROAD

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge•Kitchen•Bathroom
- D.Glazing & Central Heating•Gardens
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers

£495 PCM



Walsall DARTMOUTH CLOSE

- THREE BED TERRACE
- D.Glazing•Lounge•Dining Room
- Kitchen•Family Bathroom
- Gardens•DHSS Accepted

£495 PCM



Willenhall KINGFISHER COURT

- Two Bed Apartment
- Lounge•Kitchen•Bathroom
- D.Glazing•Central Heating
- Off Road Parking

£475 PCM



Walsall TANNERS COURT

- Two Bedroom apartments
- Lounge•Kitchen
- Bathroom•Sorry No DHSS
- Master Bedroom with En suite

From £475 PCM



Bloxwich SHREWSBURY CLOSE

- Three Bedroom Terrace
- Lounge•Dining Room
- Kitchen•Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens

£475 PCM



Walsall SCHOOL LOFTS

- Two Bedroom Ground Floor Apartment
- Fitted Kitchen•Shower Room
- Open Plan Lounge•Entrance Hallway
- Double Glazing•Security Entrance

£475 PCM



Walsall LEWIS STREET

- Two Bedroom Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Bathroom•Double Glazing
- Central Heating•Rear Garden

£450 PCM



Walsall BLACKTHORNE ROAD

- Three Bed Semi
- Lounge•Kitchen•Bathroom
- Part Gas Heated•D.Glazing
- ORP•Gardens•Sorry No DHSS

£450 PCM



Walsall APPLEDORE ROAD

- Two Bedroom First Floor Flat
- C.Heating & D.Glazing
- Parking to Rear•Through Lounge/Diner
- Kitchen•Bathroom

£450 PCM



Walsall BASALT CLOSE

- Two Bedroom End of Terrace
- Lounge and Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower fitted over bath
- ORP•D.Glazing and Electric Heating

£450 PCM



Bloxwich SIGNAL GROVE

- Two Bedroom Flat
- Lounge•Kitchen•Bathroom
- Heating•Communal Grounds
- Allocated Parking

£425 PCM



Walsall THORNBURY ROAD

- One & Two Bed Apartments
- Lounge•Fitted kitchen
- Bathroom•Electric Heating
- Double Glazing•Parking•Sorry No DHSS

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Bloxwich THE EXCHANGE

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Walsall BLOXWICH ROAD

- One & Two Bedroom Flats
- Lounge•Kitchen•Parking
- Gas Central Heating
- DHSS Accepted

From £380 PCM



Bloxwich HARRISON STREET

- TWO BEDROOM FIRST FLOOR FLAT
- double glazing & gas central heating
- Lounge•Kitchen
- Bathroom

£375 PCM



Bloxwich HARRISON STREET

- Two Bedroom Flat
- Lounge•Fitted Kitchen
- Double Glazing•Electric heating
- DHSS Accepted

£350 PCM



Walsall MOAT ROAD

- Two Bed Flat above retail premises
- Lounge•Kitchen
- Shower Room
- DHSS Accepted

£350 PCM



Walsall TUDOR HOUSE

- One Bedroom Apartment
- Lounge•Bathroom•kitchen
- Double glazing•Central heating
- Sorry No DHSS

£325 PCM



Bloxwich BARRACKS LANE

- One Bedroom Flat
- Lounge•Kitchen•Bathroom
- Double Glazing•Electric Heating
- DHSS Accepted

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Swift flies into UK market

By Graham Breeze

THE 4X4 sector is traditionally packed with massive and expensive models – equally at home on the farm track or outside the school gate.

So it is refreshing to see Suzuki clambering for a share of the UK market with the diminutive Swift 4X4.

The model has already enjoyed success in Europe and Suzuki bosses are confident that this unconventional supermini can fill a void over here, appealing to those needing a car with more traction during the winter months, but not wanting a conventional SUV.

The 4x4 is available with five doors and with the 93bhp 1.2-litre petrol engine from the regular Swift. It comes with a choice of two trims – SZ3 and SZ4.

The difference in appearance is minimal

though the 4X4 is 65kg heavier than the two-wheel-drive version and ride height is 25mm higher but the overall ground clearance is identical to the regular Swift which tends to defeat the object a little.

There was no doubting that the test model – a 1.2 SZ4 – could cope with a bit of farm tracking, but even Suzuki don't claim this is a real off-roader and it lacks a low-ratio gearbox. But it will help you cope with the frost and snow and might just get you where you want to go when lots of others fail.

On the road there was very little difference from the regular model, though the extra weight meant that the driver had to work even harder to produce results.

The 4x4 is available in SZ3 or SZ4 trim, and both versions are well-equipped. SZ3 models get seven airbags, electric front windows, air-conditioning, heated door mirrors, and a four-speaker stereo with Bluetooth and a USB input.

Along with extra plastic cladding and



skid plates, SZ4 models get climate control, automatic headlights, keyless entry and start, see average figures drop to 51.3mpg. electric rear windows and cruise control. All models get seven airbags, electric front windows, air-conditioning, heated door mirrors, and a four-speaker stereo with Bluetooth smart-looking and simple dashboard. The SZ4 gets extra plastic cladding and skid plates, climate control, automatic headlights, keyless entry and start, electric rear windows and cruise control. Suzuki are really testing the UK water with this model, a model sold in over 100 countries. The question is whether the addition of 4x4 will attract buyers from the more conventional markets. There's little evidence that there are enough changes to gain this model significant sales in the UK.

TESTED

Suzuki Swift SZ4

Model: 1.2, 5 door

Cost: £16,169

Top speed: 103mph

0-62mph: 13.4secs

CO2 emissions: 126g/km

Combined fuel: 54.3mpg

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range (excl. Ampera): Urban: 14.4 (19.6) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 27.4 (10.3) - 91.1 (3.1), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) - 85.6 (3.3). CO2 emissions: 373 - 88g/km.*

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Drivetime



Response is Rapid to put SEAT Toledo back on track

For second and third generation Toledos, SEAT unwisely deviated from this winning formula and sales were disappointing.

So when the opportunity came to re-invent the MK1 model for the modern era through the simple expedient of re-badging and re-branding Skoda's Rapid model, the Spaniards grabbed it with both hands.

The result is, well, a sensible set of wheels, the kind of car the motoring mags get all sniffy about. But also the kind of car which makes eminent sense to recession-hit families in the current climate. Let's put it to the test.

There are no pretensions here. This car's motoring remit is to get you and your family reliably, safely and comfortably from A to B – no more, no less. You probably won't be approaching your first run around the block with any real expectations of out-of-the-ordinary levels of driving enjoyment and you won't get it.

Having said that, there's relatively little not to like. If you can operate a payphone, then you won't have much trouble getting to grips with the clean, uncluttered controls, all-round visibility is excellent and both steering and gearshift feel direct and positive.

On the subject of transmission, there are three options. Both the entry-level petrol units – the unremarkable three-cylinder 75PS 1.2 12V and the more modern four-cylinder 86PS 1.2 TSI – get the same five-speed manual 'box – the one which the 90PS and 105PS diesel models have.

Go for the 105PS version of the petrol 1.2 TSI and you get six manual speeds and above that model, there's the option of an auto-only 122PS 1.4 TSI petrol variant.

From this little lot, you can't really go too far wrong, provided you don't opt for the entry-level 75PS three-cylinder petrol 1.2. It isn't really up to the task of moving a car of this size along and is far less economic than the four cylinder 86PS 1.2-litre TSI petrol engine, which isn't much more expensive and should really form the starting point of the line-up.

Rest to 62mph here occupies 11.8 seconds on the way to 114mph and if that's not fast enough, opting for this engine in turbocharged 105PS form improves those figures to 10.3 seconds and 121mph, very similar in fact to the performance return you get from the 105PS 1.6-litre diesel (10.4 seconds and 118mph).

SEAT may talk about 'motion and emotion' when it comes to the styling of all its cars, but the truth is a little different here. There's a SEAT-specific front end with its broad, angular headlamps and slender trapezoidal front grille. And a light make-over at the rear too. But these cosmetics apart, this Toledo is pretty much identical to its Skoda Rapid design stablemate.

Enormous

Raise the wide-opening tailgate and you find yourself looking at a simply enormous boot. Though the damper mounts and wheel arches intrude a little from the sides, there's still 550-litres with all the seats in place, so this is nearly 60 per cent larger than the trunk you'll find on a rival Ford Focus and nearly 40 per cent bigger than the boot in SEAT's other family hatch, the Leon.

At the wheel, well it's more Skoda than SEAT, the design clean, functional but not particularly exciting, with many of the surfaces quite hard to the touch and things like the unlined storage bins suggestive of budget brand pricing.

Still, everything is nicely laid out and seemingly built to last, and there are plenty of useful nooks and crannies, including a slot for your parking tickets.

A V-shaped centre console rises up from the footwell to the main dashboard and houses both ventilation and stereo controls.

Through the three-spoke wheel you glimpse a large, clear twin-binnacle instrument display. Nothing then to especially catch the eye, but everything perfectly in its place.

Though this Toledo isn't the most efficient contender in the Focus-class family hatchback sector, it probably does just about enough to satisfy most owners. Most effort has been reserved for the eco-orientated 'Ecomotive' version of this 1.6-litre TDI diesel, which at launch was the only variant in the range to get a Stop/start system, a set-up subsequently added to the 1.2 TSI petrol unit, able to cut the engine when not needed, say when you're stopped at the lights or waiting in traffic.

Thanks both to this and features like low rolling resistance tyres and kinetic energy recuperation, which gathers in energy that would otherwise be lost when cruising or braking, fuel savings of between five and eight per cent and a combined cycle fuel figure of 72.4mpg are possible, though CO2 emissions still can't dip beneath the magic tax-busting 100g/km barrier which some rivals breach – expect 104g/km. An ordinary Toledo 1.6 TDI like this one without the Ecomotive gadgets manages 64.2mpg and 114g/km.

But most sales of this car will be made to petrol people. Folk who should avoid the entry-level three cylinder 75PS 1.2 with its rather poor returns, 46.3mpg on the combined cycle and 137g/km of CO2.

The impressive four-cylinder 86PS 1.2, as well as being not much more expensive, more refined and considerably faster, manages 55.4mpg and 119g/km of CO2. Opt to get this engine in pokier 105PS form and the returns actually improve – expect 56.5mpg and 116g/km.

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The Vauxhall ADAM is first when putting on the style

Talk to anyone who really knows about cars and they'll tell you how good the latest generation Corsa is. Trouble is, the man in the street still associates the Corsa with the mediocre old vehicles which replaced the Nova and weren't particularly great.

The ADAM rides on a cut down version of the Corsa's chassis and that can only be good news.

It's been extensively re-engineered to suit the demands of the shorter wheelbase. It's ostensibly quite a simple set-up but Vauxhall has invested years of know-how into it.

Up front are a set of MacPherson struts while the rear end utilises a torsion beam set-up. Ease of use on urban roads is enhanced by a CITY mode, which increases the electronic power steering system's assistance at lower speeds.

This is a car that's going to sell largely on whether the styling chimes with new car buyers and Vauxhall certainly can't be accused of going at it half-cooked. There's a lot going on, the design work attributed to Brit, Mark Adams' team in Europe.

The ADAM incorporates a 'floating' roof which is visually disconnected from the body, which works particularly well with two-tone colour schemes. It looks like no other Vauxhall but still incorporates a bunch of existing styling cues.

Like MINI, Vauxhall is looking to appeal to the customer's sense of individuality in the sheer amount of colour combinations and materials. Wheels range from 16in in size for entry-level cars and there are 17 and 18in options further up the range, with a lowered sports chassis part of the deal.

Unlike many cars which offer striking exterior designs, but an interior which betrays a sudden curtailment of development budget, the cabin of the ADAM is, if anything, even bolder than the exterior.

Riotous

There's extensive use of body-coloured trim inserts, not only on the dashboard but also reaching along the centre console and onto the steering wheel, aimed at giving the interior a real riotous personality.

A seven-inch touch screen interface is the big point of interest from a technological perspective. It's both iPhone and android compatible, and can access internet-downloaded apps in the same manner as the latest Renault Clio and Peugeot 208. Where specified, the navigation and infotainment controls are all marshalled by the touch screen. There's even a choice of headlining, including an LED-lit starlight roof trim.

Prices for the 1.2-litre ADAM start at just over £11,000, so there's a saving of around £300 over the lesser-powered of the two 1.4-litre petrol models. Whichever engine you choose, the ADAM is offered with three trim levels, JAM (fashionable/colourful), GLAM (elegant/sophisticated) and SLAM (racy/sporty).

The latest generation ESP system is standard on all models and it also includes a Hill Start Assist function. The wonderful star-effect roof and a heated steering wheel are options which differentiate the Vauxhall from run-of-the-mill city car contenders and these features are key in a market that's not always led fully by upfront pricing.

Expect 53.3mpg on the combined cycle and 124g/km of CO₂ from a 1.2-litre ADAM, figures which improve to 56.5mpg and 118g/km if you specify the extra cost ecoFLEX package. As well as low rolling resistance tyres, this includes a start/stop system which cuts the engine when you don't need it, stuck in traffic or waiting at the lights.

All enough to make a difference of around five per cent to your figures, stats you can hopefully replicate on a day-to-day basis thanks to an 'Eco Drive Assistant' – basically a section of the trip computer which monitors energy consumption and indicates when to shift up.



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full time - general

SPORT

Bloxwich have to fight for the draw

Ludlow 3 Bloxwich 3
BLOXWICH Men's First XI helped their fight for survival with a hard-earned point in an exciting and action-packed game in Much Wenlock against a strong and well-drilled Ludlow team.

Bloxwich got off to a great start and defended well at the back with some tight marking and a well-worked goal from Jake Perkins secured the lead.

Ludlow responded with a well taken flick but Bloxwich replied well with a goal from Gary Williams. Ludlow scored a goal late in the first half for the scores to be level at half time. With Eddie Marrocco taking a severe hit to the mouth three weeks ago, he suffered another injury which forced him to sit out of the game after a ball bounced up, hit his arm and broke it.

At the start of the second half, Bloxwich's defender Jack Phillips comically scored his first goal of the season in the Ludlow net to Bloxwich's disappointment. The men's team rallied together and with the dismissal of a Ludlow player managed to sneak in the equaliser before the final whistle. Bloxwich pressed hard towards the end of the game but could not find that winning goal to secure the three points.

Unbeaten Wood rack up dozen

Walsall Wood 2 Coventry Sphinx 1
WOOD extended their unbeaten League run to 12 games, but were made to fight all the way by Coventry Sphinx.

Wood went ahead on 29 minutes, a free kick from wide right was delivered to the far post, Gavin Saunders headed the ball back across the goal and skipper Lee Stretton sent the ball home. Wood made it 2-0 on 34 minutes, this time the skipper turned provider, winning the ball on halfway before hitting the ball over a flat Sphinx defence.

Harry Harris timed his run to perfection receiving the ball in acres of space beyond the last defender and scored with an exquisite chip over the stranded keeper.

On 73 minutes Wilks capitalised on indecision in the Wood defence to force the ball home.

Wood were content to keep things tight for the last 15 minutes or so.

Lambert never feared the drop

BOSS Paul Lambert has dismissed fears of relegation at Villa. He insisted he was never worried about the drop after Villa took a huge leap to safety.

Sunday's 4-1 win over Norwich put them seven points clear of the Premier League's bottom three. "I never really look down," said Lambert. People were saying last week that West Ham were well and truly out of it and all of a sudden we are level with them.

"We will try to get to the next team above us and I never look at it negatively. I always think we can win games."

Injury time try brings the victory

Walsall 36 Silhillians 32
IT was the fourth minute of injury time when Walsall scored the match-winning try, which was also the first time they had been in the lead!

Silhillians produced some very good continuity skills during the first half and established a 25-17 advantage with three well-worked tries, two conversions and two penalties.

No.8 Daniel Simpson scored Walsall's first after Mehmet Vardaric won a good lineout ball.

Walsall's second try came after a Matt Wood's cross field kick was

well taken by Richard Fearnhead. The young winger, making his debut, put Chris Mould away for a fine score.

Simpson and Neil Pittaway combined well before putting Roger Weston through for a third, which he converted. The hosts made some changes at half time and thereafter, proceeded to control the game for long periods.

But it was the visitors that gained the first score of the half, in spectacular fashion. Walsall were just 15 metres from the try line and had a three man overlap.

But Lee went for the intercept-

Rugby

tion and sprinted over 80 metres for his hat-trick try. Hawkins' conversion made it 32-17 with 30 minutes left. But Walsall responded well with sustained periods of positive play and eventually scored three more tries.

Weston, McGuirt and Halbert linked together well before the ball was moved wide and the impressive Simpson went over near the corner flag.

Walsall's best try of the game was instigated by Chris Mould. He

made a fine break out of defence before finding Simpson in support.

The No.8 made good ground before finding Matt Wood with a neat try-scoring pass. Injury time saw the hosts continue to attack. The final action of the match saw young hooker Tarik Tin crash over for his first league try. Weston added the conversions to secure a remarkable victory. Walsall will face another severe test this week. They travel to the Potteries to face a strong Stoke team.

An excellent 30-13 league win for the United. They took a strong team to Wolverhampton and se-

cured the win despite being reduced to fourteen players.

A convincing 47-14 win for the Third XV over Wolverhampton. Tries by James Quigley, McDonald Foroma, Richard Haughton, Phil Stanley, Adam Dugmore, Connor Fletcher and Neil Green. Kevin Pitt kicked six conversions.

Other scores: Walsall Colts 10 Evesham Colts 5

Walsall Jrs: Shrewsbury U-14 10 Walsall U-14 26

Walsall U-13 73 Burntwood 0

Game one: Walsall U-12 0 Stoke 15, game two Walsall 10 Stoke 5.

A second chance for Dance seals the deal

Rushall Olympic 2 Buxton 2
JAMES DANCE secured a point with a successful penalty at the second time of asking late on as the Pics struggled to break a stubborn Buxton down and had to settle for a share of the points.

Dance had already missed a spot-kick on 76 minutes but got another chance in the 90th minute when substitute Dele Adebola was brought down by Ashley Palmer and this time made no mistake when he planted it firmly in the net.

It was no less than Rushall deserved as they made all the running in the second half after Buxton had gone into the break 2-1 ahead.

Rushall started brightly, with captain Carl Palmer shooting wide in the 11th minute but the Derbyshire side took the lead on 22 minutes when a long ball forward was not dealt with by goalkeeper Chris Gemmell and Liam Hardy took it round him to score.

Disallowed

Lee Morris had a goal disallowed for Buxton on 39 minutes but two minutes later it was 2-0 when Josh Davies' inswinging corner found its way straight into the net which meant Rushall now had an uphill struggle to get back in the game.

However, battling Rushall did get themselves back in the game just before the break when Stan Mugisha's shot was saved by Andy Warrington, as was the follow-up, but Mugisha got the ball back and scored.

The Pics tried to get the equaliser after the break, Palmer going wide with a shot but found it hard to create chances until the introduction of Adebola and

Football

Obeng who seemed to give their side a new impetus.

They were gifted a penalty when Obeng's shot was parried away and Karl Ashton was brought down by Neil Stevens for the referee to point to the spot.

But Dance's weak penalty was easily saved by Warrington and it looked like a shock defeat was on the cards after a great week for Rushall until Dance made amends for his earlier miss with a good spot-kick.

The result leaves Rushall in ninth spot in the Evo-Stik North Premier.

But their hopes of making the play-offs remain high as they are only four points adrift of fifth-place FC United of Manchester and have games in hand over teams above them might prove to be the edge they need.

Rushall: Gemmell, Turner, Wood, Duggan, Smith, Craddock, Palmer, Dacres (Adebola 64), Ashton, Mugisha (Obeng 64), Dance.

Subs not used: Spink; Caines; Daniel.

Buxton: Warrington, Ludlam, Green, Davies, Palmer, Brooks, Taylor (Niven 69), Stevens (Istead 81), Morris, Hardy (Thornhill 56), King.

Subs not used: Reed, Ryan.

Referee: Mr N Hopton. **Attendance:** 213

Basketball players end season undefeated



Callum Thomas, Louis Newland, Sam Hayton-Wilcox, Joe Webster (c), Liam McDermott, Tom McGeough and Tafara Zengeya

A school basketball team from Shire Oak Academy has gone the entire season undefeated to become Walsall Schools champions.

The Year8 boys squad who are all aged between 12- and 13 won all of their seven games in the regular season and in total scored more than 150 points to claim the league championship in style with their unbeaten run. Recently they clinched the league title by beating their opponents Pool Hayes 29-25.

Over the course of the season, the Year 8 squad enjoyed victories over

their local rivals seeing off teams from Brownhills, Aldridge, St. Francis, Barr Beacon, Willenhall and Walsall Academy to secure the spot as best team in the league.

The feat is all the more remarkable because the team have been playing together for less than 12 months however their hard work and training has paid dividends as they have seen off all their opponents.

Coach and PE teacher at Shire Oak Academy, Paul Banbery, said, "Since September these lads have consistently attended training and have no

less than 40 hours of team training and their hard work has paid off.

"They have been tested by a number of good teams throughout the season, but on each occasion their technical ability, tactical understanding and sheer determination to win has enabled them to see off all-comers.

"Winning the league is one thing, but doing it unbeaten is tremendous.

"These lads are a credit to themselves," added their proud trainer Mr Banbery.

Double comeback gives Walsall the win

Westfields 2 Walsall Wood 5
WOOD twice came from behind to go in 2-2 in a mistake-riddled first half, but they came roaring out of the blocks at the restart and just blew the home side away, scoring three without reply.

It was almost constant early pressure from Wood, but they should have gone behind in Westfields' first attack, a hopeful ball forward was collected by a Wood defender on the right of the Wood box, Aiden Thomas stole the ball and raced for goal, his square ball was hit wide by Jamie Cuss from the edge of the six yard box.

Wood's first real chance came on eight minutes, a free kick wide right by Craig Hancock was somehow missed almost on the goal line by Joey Butlin.

Straight to the other end, Alex O'Leary played a clever ball into the right of the box

to put Zac Sirrell in on goal, Wood keeper Raj Gill making a brave block.

On 15 minutes a Wood defender was robbed wide right by Thomas who this time went for goal himself and slotted the ball calmly past the advancing Gill to put the hosts ahead.

Five minutes later Max Black won the ball in the centre and raced at the defence, his side rule ball into the left of the box was collected at pace by Hancock, keeper Matt Gwynne racing from his line to deflect his low drive inches wide.

The relief was short-lived however as from the left wing corner Anthony Juxon powered a header into the roof of the net.

Dem Njoya benefited from a lucky bounce off Andre Gonzales wide left and found Craig Jones whose low drive was deflected across goal and went for a corner just be-

yond the far post. From the corner the ball fell perfectly for Scott Jackson to fire into the roof of the net.

With 41 minutes gone a neat one touch passing move through the centre ended with Butlin collecting the ball on 25 yards and hitting a low drive that deflected off a defender to completely wrong-foot the keeper and fly into the net.

Wood immediately won a corner at the start of the second half, Butlin powering home a header at the left hand post.

It got worse for the hosts on 52 minutes when Wood skipper Lee Stretton won the ball and playing it out wide right, the ever alert Harry Harris raced on to it, outpaced his marker as he made his way into the box before unselfishly playing the ball square for Jamie Hawkins to hammer the ball home. The game was by no means over,

with Westfields immediately winning a right wing corner, Glover's header from the flag kick somehow kept out by Gill.

Gwynne saved bravely at the feet of Black on 64 minutes before play switched to the other end and Gill raced from his area to fly kick clear from Njoya.

On 80 minutes Njoya powered in from wide left and found Cuss, his neat first time ball was collected by Gill bravely at the feet of Brad Birch.

Wood finally killed off the hosts spirited resistance on 85 minutes, an incisive run by Hancock saw him play a lovely ball into the right of the box to find Drew Aiton to calmly hit a low drive past the stranded Gwynne.

The hosts wouldn't lie down and right on 90 minutes Birch raced into the right of the box but was stopped by Gavin Saunders.

A single score is enough for victory

Lichfield & Walsall District Football League Premier

Freemans FC 1 Aldridge Town 0; Pelsall Villa 1 Burntwood Dragons 0

League One
Longhorn FC3 Burntwood Star 0

League Two
Duke of Wellington 3 Trident FC 1; Longdon Chet 4 Green Rock Tavern 1

League Three
Dog FC 2 Boatmans Rest 0

League Four
Dosthill Rangers 2 Bowman FC 3; Eximius Warriors 3 Cellar Door 1

League Trophy - Group C
Hussey Arms 5 Ros Park 0

Group D
Trent Valley Rovers 7 Turnpike FC 1

Terry Smith Cup - Rd One
Burntwood Albion 2 Erdington Star 1

Jack Donnelly Cup - Quarter Final

Walsall Phoenix 4 Swan FC 2

Harry Boston Cup - Semi Final

Paradise FC 0 Alma FC 4
Danny Donovan Cup - Semi Finals

Boney Hay 2 Cannock Wood 1; B-hills Community 1 A C Lions 2

Lichfield Charity Cup - Quarter Final

Pelsall Villa Colts 0 Prince of Wales 3

Lalkovic is looking to long term

MILAN LALKOVIC hopes to be staying with Walsall next season if they win promotion to the Championship.

The 21-year-old Chelsea forward has spent the season on loan at the Banks's and has conceded he is likely to move on from the Premier League giants when his contract expires in the summer.

Lalkovic has spoken openly on several occasions about how he has enjoyed life with the Saddlers and has now admitted he would be keen on a permanent move, if they are playing at a higher level next term.

Walsall are seventh in League One, still in with a shout of a play-off place.

"I think it will be time to leave Chelsea as I want to have regular football but we will see what happens," he said.

"I guess I want to move somewhere and settle down, I'm not shutting the door on Chelsea but I think I will move on."

Murphy retires due to injury

BIRMINGHAM defender David Murphy has announced his retirement from football due to a knee injury.

The left-back underwent surgery in November 2012 and returned in September 2013 for a run of six games - scoring twice against Millwall - before suffering a further setback in October.

Murphy, who turned 30 on Saturday, said: "All of my rehabilitation went as well as it could have done and I managed to return for a brief spell."

"However, I wasn't able to sustain the heights of my previous form and as a result I have no option but to retire."

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Dance steps in
Second chance pen-
alty brings victory
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Cock-a-hoop
Basketball team take
league title undefeated
Page 43



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Aldridge pay price for poor showing

Essington 28 Aldridge 15
THIS was very much a below par performance from Aldridge on their visit to Essington.

The early exchanges were favouring Aldridge but on Essington's first visit to Aldridge territory they snatched the lead via a well-struck penalty by No.10 Adam Smith.

It was not until the half hour that Aldridge finally managed to break the deadlock with a try in the corner from full back Alex Yates. Their lead was short-lived however, when in the last 10 minutes of the half, a second Smith penalty and two tries, from No.8 Neil Burt and scrum-half Nick Britain, put the home side firmly in the driving seat.

A penalty from Yates reduced the deficit to 16-8 at the interval but a third try five minutes into the second half by Essington lock Mark Shingler, converted by Smith, consolidated the home side's lead. Aldridge were struggling to find some consistency and momentum but persevered and midway through managed to establish some territorial advantage. A resulting penalty within the Essington 22 was quickly taken and a determined run by centre Dan McKenna took him through the defence and over close to the posts. With 10 minutes to go Essington grabbed a try by flanker Andy Barker.

Rushall beat the top dogs

Chorley 0 Rushall 1
RUSHALL moved up to ninth in the table with a magnificent win at the league leaders, only the second time Chorley have lost at home all season.

And with games in hand, Rushall have hit top form at the just right time, with the season reaching a crucial stage.

Matthew Wood's 86th minute goal after he got on the end of a slide rule pass by substitute Liam Spink gave the Pies all three points and it was no less than they deserved after taking the game to the Lancashire outfit.

Dele Adebola was behind much of Rushall's attacking play and on ten minutes he should have probably done better when set up by Wood but shot straight at Chorley goalkeeper Sam Ashton.

Late in the game Sam Smith was sent off.

Smith likely to appeal Mantom red card

WALSALL are expected to appeal Sam Mantom's red card from Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Preston.

The midfielder is facing an immediate three game ban which would rule him out of games against Coventry, Crewe and next Saturday's derby with Wolves.

Mantom was shown a straight red card eight minutes from time by referee Seb Stockbridge, after a challenge with Joe Garner which left the Preston player on the floor.

It was a decision which infuriated Saddlers boss Dean Smith, who after the game indicated he was likely to appeal it. The

Football

manager was due to sit down with club officials to review video evidence before making a final decision.

"I didn't think it was a red card at the time and having seen it again just now on video I still don't think it is," he said. "We'll appeal it. It's a shame Sam has to face a three-match ban for a poor decision. We are hopeful but you never hold your breath."

"I'll speak it over with a few people who have better knowledge than myself on decisions like that and see what they feel. But

looking at it now, it has never been a red card."

Smith also hinted he was less than impressed with the reaction of Garner, adding: "The referee is just quick to get his card out of his pocket. It's frustrating and maybe I need to get my players to start rolling around when they get fouled. That's what it makes you want to do but we certainly won't do that." The Saddlers successfully overturned captain Andy Butler's red card at Leyton Orient earlier this season and will be hopeful of a similar outcome for Mantom, who has been one of their standout players.

He was again in excellent form on Sat-

urday, scoring for the second successive game to cancel out Paul Downing's early own goal.

But Bailey Wright's header just before the half-hour mark proved to be the winner and Mantom's late dismissal only added insult to injury as Smith's side slipped to their third defeat in four games. It meant they missed the chance to close the five-point gap on sixth-placed Peterborough, who were beaten 1-0 at Crawley. Smith remains confident his team can get back into the play-off picture. "We are slipping off the pace but there is no reason why we can't go and win the next few games" he said.

Bax says spirit will stay high

JAMES BAXENDALE claims Walsall's team spirit it can see them through the slump which threatens their play-off dream.

Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Preston stretched the Saddlers winless run to five games - including three defeats in their last four.

They remain five points outside the top six and have slipped to eighth in the League One table. But Baxendale believes they have the character to turn things around and says the team is ready to fight to the bitter end for their play-off hopes.

"There is a good spirit in the team and we will fight right to the end for it," he said. "We'll look at what we did well and what we didn't do so well from Saturday - I think the majority were good points."

"The way we stuck together at the end when we were down to 10 men is credit to us."

"We want to start winning games again and we know we are good enough to do that. We stick to the same beliefs after every game this season and we are still right up there. The aim is to win every game but you go through phases like this."

A goodbye to Baggies' Stan

ALBION paid tribute to Stan Rickaby after the former Baggies full-back died at the age of 89.

The right-back made 205 appearances, scoring twice during five years at The Hawthorns.

The England international won a 1954 FA Cup-winners' medal after playing in every round before missing the final due to injury.

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SENDING OFF ADDS TO SADDLERS' WOES

Preston 2 Walsall 1

THE result hurt. A referee's decision might end up hurting more. When Seb Stockbridge flashed a red card at Sam Mantom eight minutes from time, it added further woe for the Saddlers in their play-off challenge.

The midfielder, arguably the best player in recent weeks during a five-game winless run, now faces three matches on the sidelines.

Cruelly for a player born and raised in the Black Country, that would also include Saturday's derby with Wolves.

It was a decision which looked harsh at first glance and, unsurprisingly, there was immediately talk of an appeal. Boss Dean Smith felt the challenge on Preston's Joe Garner was fair, as did Mantom's team-mates. But they also know there is no exact science to appeals. Smith will have to keep his fingers crossed.

Emerging

Mantom and defender Paul Downing, part of an emerging young spine in this Walsall team, are two of the main reasons to be excited for the years ahead. But on Saturday their respective fates encapsulated the Saddlers' struggles of late. Centre-back Downing, normally so assured and confident, looked ponderous in the seconds before he scored a calamitous own goal which handed the

Football

hosts a third-minute lead. Mantom's late dismissal further fuelled the notion everything is going against Smith's side at the worst possible time.

Until then he had been the visitors' star player, wiping out Downing's error almost immediately with an equaliser which owed much to his sheer bloody-mindedness, as he furiously followed up his own initial shot to beat keeper Declan Rudd from 18 yards.

It was Preston who would emerge victorious courtesy of Bailey Wright's goal just before the half-hour mark. You could make a case the Saddlers just about deserved a point, and they nearly snatched one in stoppage time when Rudd brilliantly tipped over substitute

James Baxendale's long-range effort. But that was his first serious save of the second half and those Saddlers fans who made the trip to Deepdale were presented with the familiar sight of their team enjoying plenty of possession but lacking any kind of cutting edge.

Preston, on the other hand, did have chances and Richard O'Donnell had one of his busier days.



Febian Brandy leaps to it to try and block the Preston goalkeeper during the away match

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